LETTER

TO

SIR JAMES GORDON, K.C.S.I.

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TO

SIR JAMES DAVIDSON GORDON,

K.C.S.I.,

RESIDENT AT MYSORE,

LATE CHIEF COMMISSIONER FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE MYSORE TERRITORIES,

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

FROM

MAJOR EVANS BELL,

LATE OF THE MADRAS STAFF CORPS,

AUTHOR OF "LAST COUNSELS OF AN UNKNOWN COUNSELLOR", "THE OXUS AND THE INDUS", "RETROSPECTS AND PROSPECTS OF INDIAN POLICY", "THE MYSORE REVERSION", ETC.

LONDON:
CHATTO AND WINDUS, PICCADILLY.

1882.

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HENRY MORSE STEPHENS

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NOTICE.

This Letter is not written merely for the correction or edification of the gentleman to whom it is addressed, but has, to make use of his own words, "a political purpose". Some words of preliminary explanation are, therefore, necessary to introduce the subject and to make it generally intelligible.

The Maharajah of Mysore, who was placed on the throne in 1799 by the allied Powers, the Honourable East India Company, and the Nizam of Hyderabad, died in March 1868, and in accordance with the decision of Her Majesty's Government, was succeeded by his infant kinsman and adopted son, the present Maharajah.

In a letter dated 7th May 1868, the Commissioner of Mysore appointed Major Charles Elliot, C.B., to the task of rearranging the Palace Establishments, and taking inventories of all the Maharajah's effects and personal property. For the purpose of assisting in this special duty, the services of Mr. C. Rungacharloo, a Deputy Collector, were placed at the disposal of the Commissioner of Mysore by the Government of Madras.*

Major Elliot and Mr. Rungacharloo were occupied for five months in arranging the various Palace Establishments, and placing the personal property of the Maharajah in a condition of order and security.†

* *Papers, Mysore Government*, 385 of 1878, pp. 60, 62.

† *Ibid.*, p. 60.

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Mr. Bowring, Chief Commissioner of Mysore, in a despatch to the Government of India, dated 29th of November 1868, says that "the difficult task of examining and cataloguing the Maharajah's property has been performed by Major Elliot and his assistant, Mr. Rungacharloo, with scrupulous care and fidelity, and great credit is due to both these officers for the excellent arrangements made by them to prevent spoliation or loss."*

These officers consequently received the thanks of Government, and Mr. Rungacharloo was appointed Controller of the infant Maharajah's Household.

The most important part of the Palace property was described and valued as follows:—

	RS.
Jewellery	26,02,233
The jewels used by the Rajah's grandson	3,68,920
The gold plate and other gold articles	4,16,570
The silver plate and other silver articles	1,80,571
And gold coins	1,70,316
Total estimated value	37,38,610†

Turning the rupees roughly into English money, we may say that the plate and jewellery found in the Mysore Palace in 1868 amounted in value to about £350,000.

According to the lists and valuation made on this occasion, the goods in the Palace Wardrobe were valued at Rs. 2,77,856, or about £25,000.

And it may be observed that a great proportion of the contents of such a Wardrobe, consisting of gold and silver brocades and tissues, would be almost as durable, and as convertible into cash, as plate or jewellery.

* *Mysore Government*, 385 of 1878, p. 92. † *Ibid.*, p. 94.

In the course of some judicial proceedings in 1874 it became known as an absolute fact that the Wardrobe property had decreased by about one-sixth, or £4,000, in value, while in the charge of Mr. Rungacharloo, by a series of what were called "burglaries".

About the same time scandalous rumours were current in Mysore as to a considerable diminution in the value of the Jewel-room property having likewise taken place under the Controllership of Mr. Rungacharloo.

These facts and rumours were brought to the notice of the Chief Commissioner of Mysore, Sir Richard Meade, in 1874, and seem to have received very slight attention.

In 1877 the fact of discrepancies and deficiencies in the value of certain articles in the jewel-room, when compared with their value as recorded in the original catalogue of 1868, became accidentally known to the Chief Commissioner, Mr. Saunders, who made no serious investigation, but was contented with a simple reference to Mr. (now Sir James) Gordon, who had acted as Guardian in 1872, and was satisfied with the following official "Note" from that gentleman :—

"I revised and rearranged, and placed in new receptacles designed by myself, the Palace jewels in July 1872, or about that time. The work was done in my presence, in that of Mr. Rungacharloo, the Controller, and all the Palace officials concerned. It was a work much required. It occupied us for several hours daily for more than six weeks. I found several such errors as that under notice, but at this distance of time, and considering the very great number of jewels, and the great number of such inaccuracies, I cannot recall the particulars of the jewels referred to herein—5, 9, 77."

All these incidents, as communicated to me, gave form and colour to the rumours that had prevailed, of some of the State Jewels having been lowered in value by a process of abstraction and substitution.

The terms of Mr. Gordon's "Note" subsequently appeared still more remarkable, when it became known that Colonel G. B. Malleson, for whom Mr. Gordon acted as Guardian in 1872, had, in December 1874, on the authority of Mr. Rungacharloo, and expressly for his exculpation, certified to "the accuracy of the original lists", even to the absence of "a single error".

Under the circumstances mentioned in the following Letter, a Memorandum signed with my initials, calling for an independent inquiry, was published in a Calcutta daily paper, the *Statesman*, on the 7th of April 1880, and republished on the 16th of June in the same year. Mr. Gordon was called upon for an explanation; and wrote an explanatory Memorandum dated the 29th July 1880, which the Government of India declared to be satisfactory.* Mr. Gordon and Mr. Rungacharloo, the two officials most interested—the two men who alone could be held answerable—were called upon to report upon themselves, and they reported favourably. Their explanation, which was promptly published, appeared to me so very unsatisfactory that I at once addressed the Government of India officially,† considering that I should not be warranted, as a loyal citizen, or as a pensioned servant of the public, in withholding such humble aid as lay within my power towards the elucidation of a very grave matter that had been manifestly mismanaged. The following Letter testifies to the failure of my efforts in that direction, and contains, I believe, a full justification of the course that I have taken.

E. B.

* *Mysore Papers*, No. 1 of 1881, pp. 146 to 150.

† Appendix B.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

TO

SIR JAMES DAVIDSON GORDON, K.C.S.I.,

RESIDENT AT MYSORE,

Late Chief Commissioner for the Government of the Mysore Territories.

SIR,

In a Memorandum submitted by you to the Viceroy of India in Council, and dated "Government House, Bangalore, the 29th of July 1880", you accuse me of having made "*strange misstatements*". In an Order of the Mysore Government, dated, "Bangalore, the 14th of March 1881", you accuse me, in stronger and more offensive language, of having, "*with the aid of garbled quotations from official correspondence and papers, attempted to weave for a political purpose a malicious story of spoliation and loss of the Mysore State Jewels.*" You charge me with perverting the truth, "garbling" documents, and falsifying evidence, from malicious motives.

Your Memorandum above-mentioned was published after the last Session of Parliament, in a Blue Book.* Your Order and Proceedings of the 14th of March 1881, forming the subject of an appeal to Her Majesty's Government, by B. Ramaswamy Iyengar, against his summary dismissal from the place of Sheristadar to the Mysore Residency, have been printed, and many copies have been distributed here, at the India Office, and in other influential circles.

After eighteen years of labour in the dry soil of

* *Mysore Papers*, No. 1, (C.—3026) 1881.

Indian politics, where not much fame or profit is to be reaped, I cannot allow my small harvest of reputation for truthfulness, fairness, and moderation in controversy, to be scattered and spoiled, or my humble field of usefulness to be trampled and torn up, by means of official slander. I say that you have accused *me* personally of "weaving a malicious story", and of "garbling" documents, because for you, and for every-one interested in Mysore affairs, the Memorandum I published in the Calcutta *Statesman*,* under my initials "E. B.", reprinted in the same Blue Book of last year, and against which your strictures are directed, was not anonymous.

I say, furthermore, that your denunciation of the Memorandum signed "E. B.", in paragraph 15 of your Order dismissing the Residency Sheristadar, as the result of "*a party agitation*", and as "*a mischievous invention set up by his caste-men*", is totally unjustifiable. You knew quite well when you penned or passed that Order that I was the writer of the Memorandum signed "E. B.", and that my information was derived from Colonel Macqueen. You must have been, or ought to have been, well aware that the Sheristadar's "caste-men" could not have had any influence whatever over the decisions of Colonel Macqueen and myself.

The Iyengars of Mysore, you may say—in fact you have said it—are hostile to Mr. Rungacharloo; and the discharged Sheristadar belongs to that clan of Brahmins. I believe you are to some extent right as to the resentment felt and expressed by many Mysoreans of that caste, on account of their being displaced by Mr. Rungacharloo's friends from Madras. There has been plenty about it in the Madras and Mysore newspapers. The Sheristadar, however, is, I am assured, a respectable plodding clerk, quite unconnected with any "party agitation", and he had not, I imagine, anything to complain of, until you most iniquitously deprived him

* 7th of April and 16th of June 1880, *Mysore Papers*, No. 1 of 1881, p. 141.

of his office and his pension, on an unfounded suspicion of divulging your Note of September 5th, 1877. Your suspicion in his case is most certainly groundless, and viewed either from a judicial or an administrative point of view, your proceedings against that poor man, dated the 14th of March 1881, are preposterous. Our information did not come from that quarter. So far as I can understand, the most valuable intelligence placed at my disposal has come from European sources. You are probably not aware of the surprise and disgust very generally felt in the English community of Mysore, at your apparent infatuation regarding Mr. Rungacharloo's merits. The greatest care in testing and verifying the information before us, has been taken by Colonel Macqueen and by myself. What excuse have you for imputing bad motives to him or to me? And how, except through perfect bewilderment, could you impute such an absurd motive to the author of the Memorandum signed "E. B.", as that of advancing the interests, or avenging the wrongs, of the Iyengar Brahmins, the Sheristadar's "caste-men". In such a connection I can attach no other meaning to the terms, "a party agitation", and "a political purpose", which you charge the poor Sheristadar with assisting. I had, indeed, and still have, "a political purpose", and will shortly explain it, but assuredly it had nothing to do with promotions or dismissals of Mysoreans or Madrassees. Placed at the head of Mysore affairs, you can hardly be ignorant of the fact, that I have not had for many years any correspondent in that country. Colonel Macqueen, who has been quite frank with you, and with every other person entitled to know his intentions and objects, informed you long ago, that he had one Native correspondent in Mysore, and one only—a gentleman of distinguished position and reputation, who has always held himself apart from all "caste" rivalries and dissensions, who corresponds with several other retired English officials, and who had no more to do with the steps we have taken than yourself. You were acquainted with Colonel Macqueen, and had corresponded with

him. My old friend, as I said before, was perfectly frank with you. You had not followed his advice to avoid the Guardianship. When it became impossible to doubt your determination—contrary, likewise, to his remonstrance—to force Mr. Rungacharloo on the Maharajah, and on the Government of India, as the Minister of Mysore, Colonel Macqueen gave you fair warning that he would do all in his power to oppose your plans, or to expose them. You observed, in one of your letters to him, that you knew my name, and admitted that the initials, "E. B.", concealed no mystery from your eyes. The Memorandum having been written merely to suggest the urgent want of some inquiry and of certain precautions, we considered that while there ought to be no secret about the authorship, the full signature might seem defiant and disrespectful to the Government of India.

Apart from your personal acquaintance and correspondence with Colonel Macqueen, you must, from your access to all the confidential records, have understood his very natural and very legitimate interest in the affairs of Mysore. The intimate and attached friend for many years of General Sir Mark Cubbon, he became convinced—in conformity with the views adopted by that eminent man, slowly, deliberately, almost reluctantly—that the annexation of the Mysore State, as recommended by the authorities at Calcutta, would be, after the Queen's Proclamation of 1858, alike unjust and impolitic. Having retired from the position of Judicial Commissioner, he became associated with Dr. John Campbell, for many years Durbar Surgeon at Mysore, as an advocate with the Home Government for the Maharajah's formal reinstatement. This agency, established with the knowledge and consent of the Viceroy, Lord Lawrence, though he withstood its object, saved the Mysore State from destruction, and the Empire from great discredit. My own small share in that good work of 1866, is one of my most pleasing recollections; but although the Mysore State was rescued from extinction by the adopted heir being recognised, the old Maharajah

failed to obtain his personal release from supersession. How very nearly it was obtained—the decision of the Secretary of State being reversed by a vote of the Cabinet—may some day, perhaps, be told. To the aged Prince it would merely have been a restitution of honour. He had agreed to claim no active share in the Government. The documents are extant whereby Colonel Macqueen was to have been placed at the head of the Mysore administration with Colonel Gregory Haines, for many years the right-hand man of Sir Mark Cubbon, in charge of the revenue and finances.

When Sir Mark Cubbon retired in 1861, he left an accumulated surplus in the Mysore treasury of a million sterling. The Rajah's personal restoration being refused, and annexation being at the time confidentially decreed, the creation of new departments, new jobs, and new salaries, went on under successive Chief Commissioners, until it fell to you to hand over his dominions to the young Maharajah in 1881, burdened with a debt of about a million and a half. I will not enter on visions of what might have been if the real successors of Sir Mark Cubbon had been allowed, while the old Rajah was yet living, to restore the simple and economical fabric of a real Native State. The experiment was not to be tried. The costly structure called the Mysore Commission, remained, with little change, during the last years of the minority, and still seems to survive in a form sufficiently strong to overawe and overshadow the young Maharajah, and to crush local interests and opinions. But Colonel Haines, though not recalled to a high administrative post, was chosen by the old Maharajah, and by the Secretary of State, Sir Stafford Northcote, to be Guardian of the infant heir.* Both the Chief Commissioner of Mysore and the Secretaries at Calcutta betrayed at once their conviction that Colonel Haines was too well informed and too much respected at Mysore to be a manageable Guardian,† and the arm of

* *Mysore Papers* (385 of 1878), pp. 13 and 19.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 12, and 16, 17.

the Secretary of State was not long enough to reach to Mysore. Nor, in fact, was the arm of the Viceroy.

The most important of all the injunctions on which Her Majesty's Government had insisted, and which was, with equal solemnity, so far as written words went, handed on to the Chief Commissioner of Mysore by the Viceroy in Council, was that "great care should be taken to remove from" the young Maharajah's household "all persons likely to initiate him, at an early age, into the vicious and demoralising practices of the zenana."* The Chief Commissioner of Mysore, being determined not to tolerate a really competent Guardian, such as Colonel Gregory Haines would have been, broke through, and was allowed to break through, the rules prescribed by the Government of India, that the Guardian should appoint the Maharajah's attendants and instructors, and that the Chief Commissioner was not to interfere in details.† Lord Lawrence, who had framed those rules, would hardly have allowed them to be thus instantly set aside, but unfortunately he left India just at this crisis, and the newly installed Viceroy, Lord Mayo, was not yet capable of dealing with Secretaries or with Provincial magnates. Immediately on his arrival, in 1869, Colonel Haines, from remarkable insight and knowledge of persons and usages in Mysore, detected a sinister alliance between Mr. C. Rungacharloo, the Controller of the Household, and a person placed in one of the most important posts in the zenana, named Murree Mullapa, a man of notorious infamy for his "vicious and demoralising practices". Relying on the salutary rules prescribed by the Government of India, Colonel Haines tried to break up this close partnership, but more particularly insisted on the removal of Murree Mullapa, against whose presence in the Palace, under any circumstances, he absolutely protested. That was quite enough; Colonel Haines's remonstrances were condemned as presumptuous, and he was worried out of the place. When Mr. Bowring, then Chief

* *Mysore Papers* (385 of 1878), p. 82.
† *Ibid.*, p. 81.

Commissioner, supported by the Foreign Office at Calcutta, refused to purify the Palace, by removing an obscene parasite, Colonel Haines at once resigned. The hands of Murree Mullapa and Mr. C. Rungacharloo were, of course, much strengthened, and their domination converted into a terror by the failure of Colonel Haines to dislodge them, and his own consequent removal. You have, doubtless, seen the correspondence in February and March 1869, which explains the first Guardian's resignation. From that day the reign of Mr. Rungacharloo commenced. Your responsibility commences at a later period.

I must not speculate on the different spirit and direction that might have been given to the present Maharajah's domestic and political training, if Colonel Gregory Haines had been able to remain for one or two years at Mysore as Guardian. Perhaps the young Hindoo Prince might by this time have been less proficient in polo and lawn tennis, and have seen more of his own people, who, after all, and in spite of the nineteen English coffee planters of whom we have heard so much, are for the most part Hindoos. But these, likewise, are mere visions of what might have been, and I have more prosaic work on hand.

You were fully acquainted, then, with the fact, that I was the author of the Memorandum in the Calcutta *Statesman*, signed "E. B.", and that it was written and published in counsel and concurrence with Colonel Macqueen, with whom you had recently corresponded on Mysore affairs. You charge me with "malice", by which you must mean, I suppose, bad motives of some sort. You also charge me with publishing "a mischievous invention set up by" the dismissed Sheristadar's "caste-men". I defy you to make out anything like malice, either in the moral or the legal sense, in my proceedings.

We now come to your charge ot "setting up a mischievous invention". The facts and official papers on which I founded my call for an inquiry—and I have done nothing more—were certainly not my "invention".

Although you talk vaguely of "strange misstatements", and of "garbling documents", you admit the accuracy of all my citations, including your Note of the 5th of September 1877; and with one exception, which soon ceases to exist, you do not impugn one of my statements. You declare, in your Memorandum of the 29th July 1880, that "save in the published Memorandum" signed with my initials, you had "never heard of any loss of jewels from the Mysore Palace"; and that "no one in the Palace is able to conjecture to what the Memorandum refers."* And yet, after a lapse of only four months, in November 1880, you have to admit, with reference to the loss of £300 in the value of a single jewel, that you had "heard" of this "loss", and of several others, in 1872, and that you are "able to conjecture" how the loss occurred. Here are your own words:—"When the lady died, in 1871, the bracelet, found amongst her jewels, was discovered to be of less value—It is believed in the Palace that the relations of the lady substituted an inferior jewel whilst it was in her possession."†

I leave you to reconcile the two statements. I reject your conjecture as to the personality of the felonious agents, but I beg to point out that you testify to the very process which the Memorandum signed "E. B." suggests, loss by "abstraction and substitution", by diminution in value without apparent deficit in the number of articles.

I am really puzzled to know what your actual contention is. I cannot believe you to maintain that until my Memorandum appeared in the *Statesman*, there were no scandalous rumours afloat as to defalcations of value in the Mysore Jewel Department, and that my suggestion of such scandals prevailing in Mysore is "a mischievous invention". You had, by your own account, found good cause for such scandals in 1872. If you, who were Judicial Commissioner in 1874, and had recently acted as Guardian, never heard

* *Mysore Papers*, No. 1 of 1881, p. 146.

† *Ibid.*, p. 168.

of the scandalous rumours regarding the jewels that were in circulation in that year, and have been current ever since, until 1880, your ears were less open than those of any other officer in the Mysore Commission.

There is, or was—for I do not know if he is alive—a Brahmin named Kanchi Rungachari, formerly one of Mr. Rungacharloo's hangers-on, who was apprehended at Mysore a few days before the Maharajah's enthronement in March 1881, brought to Bangalore in custody, held to the excessive bail of Rs. 1,000, somewhat hurriedly tried on the charge of defaming Mr. Rungacharloo, and sentenced to a year's imprisonment. Now, the defamatory libel consisted of petitions presented to the Chief Commissioner of Mysore, in 1874, embodying those very scandals regarding the Palace jewels which you, addressing the Government of India on the 29th of July 1880, say you never heard of "save in the Memorandum published in the *Statesman*," under my initials, in April 1880. But you had heard of Kanchi Rungachari before his rather tardy trial and imprisonment in 1881. If I am not very much misinformed, Sir Richard Meade, who was Chief Commissioner in 1874, sent some of this man's petitions in 1874 to you for inquiry and report. I cannot, therefore, understand how in 1880 you had apparently forgotten your official acquaintance in 1874 with these scandalous rumours. I am not, however, in the least surprised at the allegations of this obscure person, even though abetted and guaranteed by Linga Raj Urs, a member of the Rajah's family, having been disregarded. That is quite in conformity with Anglo-Indian official custom in such cases. And although I cannot exactly understand, I can very fairly conjecture why the charge of defamation, pressed on to conviction and sentence in 1881, was not promptly brought against Kanchi Rungachari in 1874. Mr. Rungacharloo had quite enough of prosecuting Kanchi Rungachari, and of otherwise judicially exhibiting himself in that year.

In 1872 and 1873 there were several so-called "burglaries" in the Palace Wardrobe at Mysore, for the

charge of which Mr. Rungacharloo was solely responsible, and property to the value of about £4,000 was lost. There is one recurrent peculiarity in the annals of the Mysore Palace Controllership and Guardianship, which appears to have caused hardly any local misgivings, and that is that information of losses and deficiencies in the Palace property has always come to the outside world, and even to the authorities, by some accident or irregularity, and never in due form or by a timely report. For example, the Wardrobe burglary of 1872—which must not be confounded with "the Palace Treasury burglary"*—was not reported to any of the authorities, and only became known, after the lapse of two years, to the Chief Commissioner of Mysore,—as we are told in Sir Richard Meade's Order of November 30th, 1874, and in his letter to the Guardian, Colonel Malleson, dated 11th of January 1875,† from the proceedings in the Magistrate's Court on the occasion to which I am now about to refer.

In September 1874 several prisoners were tried and convicted for one of these "burglaries"—whether the second or third is not quite clear. Kanchi Rungachari, who was one of the witnesses at this trial, stated that Mr. Rungacharloo, the Controller of the Household, had instructed him to induce two men to come forward and confess to the palace "burglary", on a promise of a reward of Rs. 500 for each of them. This deposition conveyed such a foul imputation against Mr. Rangacharloo, that, in order to rebut it, he brought a charge of perjury against the witness, Kanchi Rungachari, who was tried in November 1874 before the Town Magistrate of Mysore—*and acquitted.* The Magistrate considered it clear enough that Mr. Rungacharloo had, in fact, privately offered a reward of Rs. 500 in this matter; and he narrowed the issue to two alternatives: (1) the reward was either offered for the production of Queen's evidence; or (2) it was offered to suborn false

* *Mysore Papers*, No. 1 of 1881, p. 173. I confess I know nothing of this burglary, except that it is quite distinct from the Wardrobe "burglaries".

† Appendix A.

witnesses. He decided for the former and more favourable supposition, and dismissed the defendant with some rather contemptuous remarks regarding the prosecutor.

It can easily be conceived that, after the failure of this prosecution for perjury, Mr. Rungacharloo may not have considered it prudent or politic to open the floodgates of public debate by indicting his former dependant for defamation. At any rate, Kanchi Rungachari was left to his own devices until March 1881, in the last days of your Chief Commissionership, and just before the administration of Mysore was transferred to Mr. Rungacharloo, so that the defamatory petitioner was safely lodged in gaol, after seven years' immunity, by the authority of a British officer.

This unsuccessful prosecution for perjury, and the long series of civil suits brought by the widow of Murree Mullapa, not settled until 1879, by no means exhaust the list of Mr. Rungacharloo's appearances in the Mysore courts of justice in 1874. He was in that year defendant in two cases of trespass and assault brought against him by the widow of Devaraj Urs, a relative of the Maharajah, and one of her servants, to whom he had offered personal violence with his own hands. In one of these cases, Mr. Rungacharloo was fined Rs. 100, and in the other, Rs. 200. On appeal, however, he pleaded that he was acting in his "political" capacity, and that the precincts of the palace were exempt from the jurisdiction of the courts. The Chief Commissioner upheld the plea, and the judgments were quashed. On the other hand, it must, in justice to Mr. Rungacharloo, be stated that in cases of this description, he has not always been the assailant. He was, very soon after being thus relieved by special dispensation from the legal consequences of his own stern system of discipline, himself severely slippered within the walls of the Palace by some of the Ranee's retainers, and when the culprits were brought by him before the magistrate, they were not allowed to plead that they lived in a royal Alsatia, but were treated as ordinary

offenders against the law. Unfortunately, no punishment can wipe out a slippering. In India, the fact of having been slippered, even unjustly, derogates from a man's dignity and renders him incurably ridiculous. And in this case, public sympathy in Mysore, most unofficially perverse and prejudiced, was on the side of the delinquents.

These were some of the incidents, it may be assumed, which led your predecessors, Mr. Saunders and Sir Richard Meade, to blame Colonel Malleson, the Guardian, for having "left too much power in the hands of" Mr. Rungacharloo, "an official of undoubted ability and integrity, but greatly disliked by the Ranees and their dependants".*

The brief survey we have taken of some of his judicial experiences, well deserving a more detailed scrutiny, but probably unmentioned in your official report on his merits, would hardly impress anyone quite unversed in the ways of Anglo-Indian administration with a strong conviction as to Mr. Rungacharloo's personal dignity, or as to the likelihood of his being influential and popular in the Mysore territories. You, however, must have cared for none of these things, or must have acquired some knowledge or some belief as to Mr. Rungacharloo's acceptability and popularity unknown to your predecessors, for you presented him to the Viceroy of India in Council, in 1879, as "the fittest person in the Province for the appointment" of Minister, and as "being preferred by the Maharajah to any others who might be nominated".† "Mr. Gordon," you say "has consulted the Maharajah on the point." "The names of all officers employed in Mysore, who are in any way eligible for the place, have been deliberately laid before the Maharajah, and he has expressed his undoubted preference for Mr. Rungacharloo."‡

* Despatch in the Secret Department from the Viceroy, Lord Lytton, in Council, to the Secretary of State for India, dated "Simla, 3rd May 1877", paragraph 8.

† *Mysore Papers*, No. 1 of 1881, pp. 182 and 187. ‡ *Ib.*, p. 187.

And yet you had at this time recommended to the Government of India, as "absolutely necessary", not only that the nomination to the office of Minister should be reserved for the Government "by means of the power of approval or veto",* but also that it was "most desirable to make this intention known in unequivocal terms, rather than to leave it as a matter of inference, as has not unfrequently been the practice elsewhere".† I should be surprised, therefore, to hear that you had not made "this intention known" in good time to the young Maharajah, "in unequivocal terms".

Two years before the Maharajah's installation, you had also obtained permission from the Government of India to place Mr. Rungacharloo in the position of your Secretary "to be trained for the office of Dewan", "in close relation with yourself".‡ I should be very much surprised to hear that this fact was not made known in good time to the young Maharajah, by yourself or by the Dewan designate, "in terms quite unequivocal", even if indirectly conveyed.

Under the circumstances, very sufficiently revealed in the Blue Book, I cannot admit the possibility of the Maharajah, eighteen years old, secluded from converse or contact with any of the notables of his country, with Mr. Rungacharloo as *Maire du Palais* during the whole of the minority, having ever been allowed to feel that he had a free choice in the matter. I cannot believe that there can have been any great alacrity on the part of Mr. Rungacharloo, or the people appointed by him and in his interest near His Highness's person, to reassure the Maharajah as to his right to express a real preference for any particular person as his first Dewan, or an objection to any particular person—to persuade him, in short, that he had a perfect right to celebrate the day of his majority, or to anticipate his emancipation, by flying in the face of the Chief Commissioner and the Viceroy, and rejecting their nominee for the

* *Mysore Papers*, No. 1 of 1881, p. 187.
† *Ibid.*, p. 94. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

office of Dewan after that nominee had been two years "in training" for the office.

I may seem to have been once more wandering a little from my proper task, which is that of defending myself from your attacks on the Memorandum in the *Statesman*, signed "E. B.", relating to the Mysore Jewels. Mr. Rungacharloo's eligibility for the office of Minister is not entirely irrelevant, but I will return to the main subject.

You have accused me of making "strange misstatements", without pointing out anything of the sort. You have accused me of "garbling documents", without offering a single instance of anything that can have appeared to you in that light. You have, I am aware, made free use of such terms as "a mare's nest", "a weak and easily exposed invention". The *Pioneer*, well known to be officially inspired, called my Memorandum an "unadulterated fiction", and you gave your approval to that somewhat unhappy compound. You accuse me of "weaving a malicious story of spoliation and loss of the Mysore State Jewels". I again defy you to point out anything like malice, either in the moral or the legal sense, in anything I have written. No story of spoliation or loss originated with me. In the Memorandum signed "E. B.", official records are quoted proving an unexplained and unreported loss of value in the jewels between the completion of the catalogue by Colonel Elliot in 1868 and the rearrangement by yourself and Mr. Rungacharloo in 1872. Your own official Note of the 5th September 1877 is quoted, in which you state that in July 1872 you found "a great number of such inaccuracies". The most remarkable among "the great number" of unreported "inaccuracies", was that of a jewel, No. 32, which, although catalogued by Major Elliot in 1868 as worth Rs. 6,000 (say £600), "appeared small" in 1872, and was found only to be worth about Rs. 600 (say £60). Your Committee of November 1880 report a similar discrepancy in the value of another jewel, No. 171, from the same collection, allotted to the same widow Chundra Vilasa, who died in June

1871, about a year before the rearrangement which you commenced in July 1872. Thus there is ample evidence that before that rearrangement the jewels had been feloniously reduced in value. To what extent they have been reduced cannot be told without a revaluation. I wrote my original Memorandum signed "E. B.", knowing nothing of the second remarkable "inaccuracy", No. 171. But when you and Mr. Rungacharloo are now compelled to acknowledge, in contradiction to your previous denials, that the valuable jewel so numbered was abstracted and replaced by an inferior article, I consider myself justified in still explaining, by the same process of "abstraction and substitution", the reduction of Jewel No. 32 of the same Chundra Vilasa collection from its estimated value of Rs. 6,000 (£600) to the actual value of Rs. 600 (£60). That was the opinion expressed in the Memorandum signed "E. B.", and it is verified by your Committee of November 1880. The explanation you at first preferred of "a merely clerical error" is now totally inadmissible.

What I did in the Memorandum signed "E. B." was not, as you misrepresent it, "to make specific statements as to losses", not to make charges against any-one, but to affirm the existence of a scandal and to call for an investigation.

I considered it my duty, in the last paragraph of my Memorandum, after pointing out what seemed to me to be grave reasons for an independent inquiry, to urge that "if the very same functionaries who had been singled out by circumstances for sole responsibility, were to be left unprotected by any inquiry or supervision, to hand over to the young Maharajah, by their own method and process, property valued in 1868 at more than £350,000, and virtually to grant themselves an acquittance, the seed would be sown for future crops in mischievous rotation of incurable scandals and unanswerable claims". The very course which I humbly ventured to deprecate has been pursued. No independent inquiry has been made; no precautions have been taken.

The course which I suggested would have been—as I fully expect some of your own friends will tell you by the time they have read this Letter—the best one for your own protection. You took my intervention, however, in bad part, and have reduced me to the necessity of protecting myself. You felt secure, and, as it appears, on good grounds, of being officially supported; and of no weight being given to an unauthorised and irregular warning. You have been allowed to hand over to the young Maharajah, without valuation, property valued in 1868 at more than £350,000. You as Resident, late Chief Commissioner, and Mr. Rungacharloo as Minister, late Controller of the Household, have exchanged mutual acquittances. The Government of India confirms, approves, and is quite satisfied. Kanchi Rungachari is sent, for a year, to gaol. The Residency Sheristadar, wrongly suspected of giving me information, is dismissed by you, without a pension, after twenty-three years' service. You are made a Knight of the Star of India. If Mr. Rungacharloo were only exalted to the same dignity, I suppose my confusion ought to be complete. But I am not confused, or confuted. I still maintain that for your sake an independent inquiry, and a revaluation of the Mysore State Jewels, were very desirable.

In the Memorandum signed "E. B.", I pointed out that any examination of the jewels would be delusive and inconclusive, and would fail to clear away the scandalous rumours that had prevailed for seven years, unless it were, as recommended by Captain F. A. Wilson in 1877, conducted by "a special agency" of unquestionable independence. I urged also that, as the injurious report was, as ineffectually hinted by Captain F. A. Wilson in 1877, that "jewels" had not always been "restored to the jewel-room in the same state in which they were taken out"*—that they had been, in short, "sweated"—the great object of inquiry must be a revaluation of the jewels, to be compared with the careful estimate made by Major Elliot and Mr. Rungacharloo, with a jury of experts, in 1868.

* *Mysore Papers*, No. 1 of 1881, p. 150.

This, perhaps, is the most appropriate place to mention that the story current in Mysore, as told to me, is that if the Jewels were now to be revalued, it would be found that at least one-sixth, if not one-fifth, of their value, had evaporated,—the Jewel-room property being, it is said, diminished in about the same proportion as the Wardrobe property was, confessedly, diminished in Mr. Rungacharloo's charge. You may call the story a legend,—you may call it a myth,—but it is the refusal of inquiry that converts these myths or legends into articles of popular faith.

Your opinion as to a special and independent inquiry, and as to a revaluation, differed entirely from mine. You considered, and your course has been approved by the authorities at Calcutta, that no valuation was required, and that it would be enough to call together a Committee composed of those among your subordinates who had been connected with Palace affairs, including Mr. C. Rungacharloo, and to preside over it yourself. For thus constituting the Committee you gave the curious reason that "as no examination of the jewellery had been made since that conducted by Mr. Gordon in 1872, and as such specific statements had been made of losses that had occurred since the original examination of 1868, it was thought to be very desirable that, at the present examination, all the officers in India who had at any time since the Maharajar's death had charge of the jewellery should be present".* Of course they ought to have been present as witnesses, but not as judges.

It is clear that you perfectly understood what you were doing in thus packing the Committee, although its impropriety did not strike you, because you conclude your despatch of the 18th of December 1880, by declaring your confidence that "it will be seen how utterly unfounded are the statements which have been so industriously circulated, and how thoroughly satisfied all the responsible officers concerned are as to the complete identity and accuracy of the jewels", and by

* *Mysore Papers*, No. 1 of 1881, p. 166.

expressing your "trust that the results of the examination now reported will satisfy His Excellency the Viceroy in Council that there is not any ground whatever for ascribing to the responsible officers in Mysore, in the past or present, any neglect in the preservation of the Mysore State jewels".*

Doubts having been set forth "as to the complete identity and accuracy of the jewels", "specific statements having been made as to losses", "neglect" having been ascribed to "the responsible officers", you think it quite enough that "the responsible officers" concerned should combine to declare themselves "thoroughly satisfied" with their own conduct.

Even this does not fully convey the utter nullity of this pretended inquiry by your subordinates. For the real question, after all, was not *their* conduct, but *yours*. Not one of the subordinate officials, whom you and Mr. Rungacharloo paraded at Mysore in November 1880, had ever been "in charge of the jewellery". Not one of them had taken any part in the unsanctioned and unreported rearrangement of 1872. You and Mr. Rungacharloo, and you two only, are "the responsible officers".

Mr. Krishna Murti says:—"I never had charge of the jewellery at any time."† He acted as Controller of the Household, under the Tutor, Captain (now Major) F. A. Wilson, while Mr. Rungacharloo was absent on leave—at a very critical time, as we shall see—in 1877.

Mr. Sheshadri Iyer acted as Controller, under Colonel Hay, in 1878 and 1879, and "had no exclusive charge of the Palace jewellery".‡

Mr. Ananda Rao says:—"I have not at any time had immediate charge of the Palace jewellery." He was only Assistant-Commissioner superintending the Household under Colonel Hay, from May 1879.§

Colonel Hay only answers for his "general charge of the Palace duties" since April 1879.‖

* *Mysore Papers*, No. 1 of 1881, p. 167.
† *Ibid.*, p. 171.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 177.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 178.
‖ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

To these disclaimers of responsibility there is one apparent exception. Major F. A. Wilson, who, "although invited, was unable to attend" at Mysore, writes from Hyderabad:—"As Tutor to His Highness the Maharaja, I was in charge of the Guardian's office from July 1876 till relieved by Mr. Gordon early in 1878, and, in that capacity, had charge of the Palace jewellery, holding in my possession the key of an iron safe (under a sentry), in which were deposited the keys of the jewel-room and of the cases containing the jewellery."* He had, in short, from July 1876, to February 1878, been in charge of the master-key. That is all he means.

It does not appear, and I certainly do not assert, that even you were ever in "exclusive" or "immediate" charge of the jewellery.

Out of the seven persons, yourself included, whose signatures or depositions are attached to the report of November 1880, only *one* was "at any time since the Maharajah's death", in "immediate" and "exclusive" charge of the Palace jewellery. This was Mr. Rungacharloo. He was, from July 1869 to May 1879, "vested with authority in the Palace", over all "the various departments."† He alone kept the key of the wardrobe. He had charge of the "jewellery in daily use of the several departments", as Colonel Malleson states in his letter to the Chief Commissioner of the 22nd of December 1874.‡ In addition to this jewellery in daily use, often amounting to "a lakh of rupees, or more, in value", which had to "remain out for days and months", there was "jewellery of the value of some lakhs of rupees", left out for the use of "the Dowager Maharanis, and other ladies", from the time of Colonel Elliot's settlement until the decease of those ladies. Thus, during several years, jewels, "of the value of some lakhs of rupees", including the "especially large" collection of the Ranee Chundra Vilasa, were subject to the absolute control of Mr. Rungacharloo. He does, indeed, assert, in his deposition, that "in every instance of the death

* *Mysore Papers*, No. 1 of 1881, p. 170.

† *Papers, Mysore Government*, 385 of 1878, p. 130.

‡ Appendix A.

of these Maharanis and ladies, the jewellery was completely accounted for.* But that assertion, as will be seen, is falsified by this very Report of November 1880, and by other official records that will be cited; and the extent or limits of that falsification can only be defined by a revaluation of the jewels.

Mr. Rungacharloo, moreover, and he alone, had, as we shall see, the master-key in his possession, for days and weeks together, without the check or supervision of any English officer.

Let us now recapitulate what you did in October 1880. You "invited" six officials to form a Committee of Inquiry into the condition of the Mysore jewels, on the strange ground that they had all been in charge of the jewels. You called on these officers to assume a judicial position, when they were obviously disqualified as judges. You called on them to come forward as witnesses to matters of which they were, with one exception, necessarily ignorant. Not one of them, with the exception of Mr. Rungacharloo, had been even in partial or temporary charge of the jewels before July 1876. But all the "specific statements" as to "losses" with which you had to deal, referred to misfortunes or malpractices before the completion of your unsanctioned rearrangement of the jewels in July 1872. It was then, according to your official note of September 5th, 1877, that you discovered a jewel (No. 32 of the Chundra Vilasa collection) valued in 1868 at Rs. 6,000 (£600) to be only worth a tenth of that sum, about Rs. 600 (£60), and found, likewise, "a great number of such inaccuracies". Another article from the same Chundra Vilasa collection (No. 171), a diamond bracelet, valued at Rs. 5,000 (£500), was found by the Committee of 1880 to be only worth about Rs. 2,000 (£200). The report adds:—"It is believed in the Palace that the relations of the lady substituted an inferior jewel whilst it was in her possession."†

The statement as to belief "in the Palace" is one that is very easily made, but being made by the very

* *Mysore Papers*, No. 1 of 1881, p. 174. † *Ibid.*, p. 168.

person who must be more or less responsible and blameworthy, at least for any irregularities or negligence that may have facilitated malpractices, this vague reference to invisible and anonymous culprits can hardly be considered conclusive by any one. It must be taken for what it is worth, as an excuse put forward by Mr. Rungacharloo, who was for ten years "vested with authority over all the departments" of the Palace. It is manifestly worth nothing, and less than nothing, as a proof of what you claim to have established, "that the arrangements for the preservation of the Palace jewellery have been, since the original registration in 1868, carefully and duly observed".* But it is worth a great deal as a proof, extracted from your packed Committee, that between 1868 and 1872 the process of "abstraction and substitution" was actually employed as a means of depredation on the Maharajah's jewels. "Abstraction and substitution" are the words I used in paragraph 14 of the Memorandum, signed "E. B".† You protested against them, and charged me with "strange misstatements" as to a supposed loss of jewels.‡ In the last paragraph but one of your Memorandum, dated the 29th of July 1880, offered to the Government of India as a full and sufficient answer to my Memorandum on the Mysore jewels, you "have no hesitation in assuring the Government that, notwithstanding the inconvenience occasioned by the large quantities of jewellery frequently required for the use of the Maharaja and the Maharani, *there is no reason whatever to believe that any loss or malpractices have taken place*".§

In July you declare "any loss or malpractice" to be incredible. In November 1880, you had to report a "loss" of £300 in value on one item, by the very "malpractice" of "abstraction and substitution" suggested in my Memorandum, and which four months before you had "no hesitation" in declaring incredible.

You and your subordinates had also to admit in that same report of November 1880 that this instance of

* *Mysore Papers*, No. 1 of 1881, p. 168.
† *Ibid.*, p. 144. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 146. § *Ibid.*, p. 149.

*

abstraction and substitution was discovered "when that lady", the Ranee Chundra Vilasa, "died, in 1871". It must, therefore, have formed one of the "great number of inaccuracies" of which you took note in your rearrangement and "fresh lists" of July 1872, and which you reserved *in petto*, until one of them was accidentally revealed in 1877.

We learn, also, from your Committee of November 1880, that out of a parcel of thirty-eight diamonds, No. 566, valued in the original catalogue at Rs. 1,500, twenty-four were wanting. "This deficiency", a deficiency in value, on one item, of about £100, "had been noticed in the examination of 1872."* It may have been noticed, but it was not reported, either to the Chief Commissioner, or to Colonel Malleson. There is no suggestion of a clerical error, but you say:—"It will probably be found on inquiry that they have been used in repairs of other jewels."† This simply means that this deficiency of £100 in value is not accounted for, that it is not traced, and that no one is held responsible for it.

There is another little parcel that the Committee of November 1880, returns as "not found":—"No. 544. Six loose addikes (links) belonging to a pounchi (bracelet), value Rs. 600. It is a question whether our not finding No. 544 is due to a mistake in the original list of 1868, or to its being mixed up with other jewels, as in 1868 it was recorded as consisting of loose pieces of a broken jewel."‡

This, likewise, being translated into the vulgar tongue, means that another item, No. 544, valued at £60, is not accounted for, is not traced, and that no one is held responsible for it.

Mr. Krishna Murti, also, informs us, by the way, of another lost jewel, no mention of which appears anywhere else, and the value of which is not stated. "One jewel", he says, "was accounted for as having been stolen in the Palace Treasure burglary;"§ one of the

* *Mysore Papers*, No. 1 of 1881, p. 168.
† *Ibid.*, p. 168. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 168. § *Ibid.*, p. 173.

incidents called by that name which recur so frequently during Mr. Rungacharloo's Controllership, without apparently exciting more than a languid curiosity in any official bosom.

These "facts now reported", after an eight days' hasty examination, and, as Mr. Krishna Murti innocently betrays to us, without any "valuation", by no means "establish conclusively" to my mind, that there is any weight in your assurance as "Chief Commissioner", "that this valuable property has been throughout preserved with the strictest fidelity and care".*

On the contrary, no one can now deny that the annals of the Controller's Department during the last nine years testify to the accuracy of the "specific statements" regarding "losses" of some of "the very valuable property kept in the Palace", and to some remarkable deficiencies in its value, as estimated and recorded in 1868.

The Wardrobe was entirely and exclusively in Mr. Rungacharloo's charge, as we learn from Colonel Malleson's letter to the Chief Commissioner, of the 22nd of December 1874.† The Wardrobe was estimated by Colonel Elliot and Mr. Rungacharloo in 1868 to be worth about £25,000.‡ Before the end of 1874, as we are told by Sir Richard Meade, the Chief Commissioner, in his Order dated the 30th of November in that year, Mr. Rungacharloo had managed to lose about a sixth part of this "very valuable property"—clothes to the value of at least £4,000 having disappeared in a series of what were called "burglaries". These incidents were very lightly treated by Sir Richard Meade, who did not even know how many had occurred, though he seems to have known that the first of them had never been reported.§ In his Order of the 30th of November 1847, the loss of Rs. 36,000 (£3,500) in one of these "burglaries", does not seem to strike him as a matter

* *Mysore Papers*, No. 1 of 1881, p. 167.

† Appendix A.

‡ *Mysore Government*, 385 of 1878, p. 91.

§ I have heard that there were no less than five of these "burglaries."

of great moment, though he censures Mr. Rungacharloo for "supineness" and "inadequate action" on the loss being discovered.

In this respect your tone and touch throughout, both as Guardian and as Chief Commissioner, are quite in harmony with Sir Richard Meade's instrument. Having discovered in 1872 "a great number" of such discrepancies between the actual value of jewels and the estimate formed by a jury of experts in 1868, as reduced them to a fraction of their recorded value, you did not consider this discovery of sufficient importance to be either made known "at the time", or at any time, to your official superior, the Chief Commissioner, or communicated, on his return, to Colonel Malleson, the Guardian, for whom you were acting, or to anyone else who was in a position to institute a serious inquiry.

Again, having in July 1880, denied that "any loss or malpractices had taken place,"* you admit both loss and malpractice in November 1880,† but pronounce the "differences" arising therefrom to be "slight" and immaterial."‡ Deficiences of £540, £300, £100, and £60 in the value of single items in the list of jewellery, (No. 32, 171, 566, and 544)§ may be considered by you to be "slight" and "immaterial"; they would hardly seem so in the eye of an ordinary man of business. They would certainly not be so accounted either in the Viceroy's Tosha-khana, or in the jewel-room of a reigning Rajah; but in the Palace of Mysore the Viceroy had no concern, and the Rajah had no control.

Mr. C. Rungacharloo is in complete accordance with you as to the "slight" and "immaterial" nature of the deficiencies in value.

"The result of the examination", he says, "was that all the jewels have been fully accounted for; the four or five items of differences found in articles of trifling value, some in excess and others by way of deficiency, were such as must be expected from the confused manner in which numerous petty articles have been

* *Ante*, p. 21.
† *Ante*, pp. 21, 22.
‡ *Mysore Papers*, No. 1 of 1881, p. 167.
§ *Ante*, pp. 21, 22.

mixed up with the larger jewels in the original registration."*

He thus professes to consider such articles as a seven-string necklace (No. 32) valued at £600, and a diamond bracelet valued at £500, to be "of trifling value", and "the four or five items of difference"—such as £540 on No. 32, £300 on No. 171, £100 on No. 566, and £60 on No. 544—to be "such as must be expected". The whole of this answer will be seen to be irreconcilable with the facts. The jewels in which deficiencies appear are not "of trifling value", and were not in any instance "mixed up" with "petty articles."

Nor is Mr. Rungacharloo's plea of petty articles "in excess", to counterbalance deficiencies, admissible. No excess worth speaking of appears; nor would any such excess do away with the acknowledged abstraction and substitution in the instances of No. 32 and No. 171,—instances which might, for all that we can know until Mr. Krishna Murti's "proper valuation" is instituted, be greatly multiplied.

Mr. Sheshadri Iyer, one of Mr. Rungacharloo's lieutenants, brings forward, likewise, this groundless plea of an "excess". He echoes your assurances of July 1880, in the following words:—"I have no hesitation in saying that the whole of the palace jewellery, as per Colonel Elliot's list of 1868, has been fully and satisfactorily accounted for." And he gives as his reason for this conclusion, that although some "articles of small value" may not be forthcoming, "on the other hand, an excess was found, consisting of loose pearls and precious stones and sundry small articles of jewellery, and this would, in my opinion, to a great extent account for the deficiencies above referred to."† It is perfectly clear, for the reasons already given, that it would not account for any one of the serious deficiencies.

The truth is, that in reviewing your proceedings of November 1880, even the discrepancies regarding the value of jewels therein acknowledged, are not as re-

* *Mysore Papers*, No. 1 of 1881, pp. 175, 176.

† *Ibid.* p. 178.

markable as the discrepancies between the acknowledgments of the "Joint Report", and the denials that each separate member of the packed Committee gives in his answers to your eight leading questions.

Mr. C. Rungacharloo says:—"I have no reason to suspect any irregularities of any kind. Everything has been so completely and accurately accounted for."*

Mr. T. Ananda Rao says:—"I have found no sufficient reason to suspect that a less valuable jewel has been fraudulently substituted for a more valuable one, or that any jewel has been altered for the purpose of diminishing its value."†

Mr. K. Sheshadri Iyer says:—"I have no reason whatever to suspect any fraudulent substitution or alteration of any jewel."‡

Colonel A. C. Hay says:—"Opinions may differ as to the absolute correctness of the valuation of the jewels, but there is no reason to suspect that any fraudulent substitutions or alterations have been made."§

And this although they had just signed, or were about to sign, the Report declaring a flagrant instance of fraudulent substitution and alteration, discovered by you and Mr. Rungacharloo in 1872, and unrevealed until 1880.

You had "no hesitation", in July 1880, in pronouncing the notion of "any loss or malpractices" to be quite incredible, and in expressing your "confident belief" in the "scrupulous care and fidelity" with which the jewels had been preserved.‖ Your "want of hesitation" is reproduced, and your "confident belief" is repeated, for the most part, as we have just seen, in the answers given separately by the members of the Committee, who collectively, in their "Joint Report", admit the occurrence of both "loss and malpractice". But even amidst this inconsistent unanimity there are some perceptible reservations. Major F. A. Wilson, for example, in his reply to Question 2, seems to be more anxious than the other deponents to give no opinion as

* *Mysore Papers*, No. 1 of 1881, p. 176. † *Ibid.*, p. 179.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 177. § *Ibid.*, p. 170. ‖ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

to occurrences beyond the limits of the time when he was acting as Tutor to the Maharajah. He says:—"I cannot remember ever to have heard or in any way become aware of any irregularity or impropriety in connexion with the palace jewellery during the period of my charge."*

Having made answer so far, he does not seem to have considered himself called upon to say anything with reference to the second part of Question 2, requesting him to state "in detail", whether he took any "action", in consequence of "information" received as to irregularities. I shall have immediately to show that Major Wilson *did* take very effective "*action*" for the better security of the jewels. He may have done so without any information, and without any rumours as to previous irregularities; but this is by no means clear, and is in itself highly improbable. It would seem rather that at the critical moment of 1877, Major F. A. Wilson, or some one at his elbow, was on the verge of avowing suspicion. The following sentence from paragraph 6 of the Tutor's letter of 21st August 1877, looks very much as if he suspected that there had been some previous malpractices or negligence in the department:—"Care is, however, *at present*, taken to see that jewels taken out are restored to the jewel-room in the same state in which they were taken out."† This hint covers nearly the whole ground of the scandals that have long been prevalent in Mysore, as to the abstraction and substitution of jewels,—well founded scandals as we now know from the reluctant acknowledgments that my pressure has forced from you and your select Committee of 1880.

Mr. Krishna Murti, and Mr. Ananda Rao, whose position and connections, as I understand, secure them from being entirely dependent on the goodwill of Mr. Rungacharloo, do not seem to me to join in the chorus of general content with the same vigour and fervour as Mr. Sheshadri Iyer. They guard themselves with

* *Mysore Papers*, No. 1 of 1881, p. 170.
† *Ibid.*, No. 1, p. 150.

qualifications, and they let out little facts of considerable significance, that we do not find anywhere else. Between them, they open our eyes to the path and the process by which the "malpractices" of "abstraction and substitution", denied in your own despatches, but admitted in the "Joint Report", where their subdued voices are heard,—may have been carried on, and to the possibility that these "malpractices" may have been much more extensive than you are inclined to believe.

"The main stock of jewellery", says Mr. Ananda Rao, "is kept in a room on the first floor of the Palace, not far from the Maharajah's sleeping apartments, and quite accessible from the zenana apartments of the palace."* "Quite accessible from the zenana,"—let us take note of that. The room is described by Mr. Krishna Murti as being "in the middle of the Palace buildings, surrounded on all sides by several sets of rooms and walls. There are no approaches to it from outside, except through the usual passage. So, therefore, the best room available for the purpose has been utilized." (That opinion as to its being "the best room for the purpose," is rather awkwardly placed, considering what follows.) "This room", he continues, "had, when it was first opened during my Controllership, *three doors, two of which in the side walls were, I learnt, only chained from inside, while the third main door was locked and sealed from outside. Captain Wilson and I took the additional precaution of putting on locks to the two side doors. Since then I see the doors have been, as was thought desirable by us, shut up and walls raised.*"†

And here is Major Wilson's testimony as to the same point:—"*Two side doors of the jewel room, secured on the inside but not locked, of which I had previously been unaware, came to my notice on one of these occasions. These doors were, under my directions, provided with locks,* as I considered their condition out of harmony with the otherwise generally rigid arrangements

* *Mysore Papers*, No. 1 of 1881, p. 178. † *Ibid.*, p. 172.

for the safe custody of the jewels, which were in my opinion efficient and satisfactory."*

This very peculiar arrangement of doors was, therefore, not considered by Major Wilson and Mr. Krishna Murti to be either "efficient" or "satisfactory" "for the safe custody of the jewels", and they had it altered. Yet Mr. Rungacharloo had been satisfied with it for eight years, and you—if it was ever brought to your notice—could not have considered it objectionable. But I think the Tutor and the Acting Controller were more discreet than you and Mr. Rungacharloo. The caution evinced by Mr. Krishna Murti, and the "action taken" by Major F. A. Wilson, when they found out the double back-entry, "quite accessible from the zenana", into the jewel-room, in addition to the front or formal entry, seem to me to have been most judicious. Unfortunately, they came a little too late. Your own official Note of the 5th of September 1877, and the Report of your Committee of November 1880, prove that it was a case of shutting the stable-door when the steed was stolen. The very imperfect revelations called forth by my Memorandum in the *Statesman*—very imperfect in the absence of Mr. Krishna Murti's "proper valuation"—show that the felonious alteration of No. 32 and No. 171, causing a loss of £840 in value in two items, and the disappearance of twenty-four diamonds worth £100, from No. 566, besides other similar "slight and immaterial differences", all occurred before you inaugurated the "great improvement", as you call it, of new bureaus and Chubb's locks in 1872. Mr. Krishna Murti and Major F. A. Wilson introduced a still greater improvement when they locked the two superfluous doors; but it was too late. The Chubb's locks, the master-key and the seals, before and after 1872, are exposed as a mere sham safeguard, when we know that by the dexterous detachment of a chain from a hook, during an official visit, the jewel-room could at any time have been left open to clandestine and predatory incursions. Mr. Ananda Rao and Mr.

* *Mysore Papers*, No. 1 of 1881, p. 171.

Krishna Murti, between them, explain how the jewel-room was "quite accessible", and could be got at through "the Zenana", where we know there was at least one inmate, Murree Mullapa, familiar with the ways of the place, and well qualified for participating in the work of "abstraction and substitution". Nothing but the "proper valuation", for which Mr. Krishna Murti calls, can reveal how far that work had proceeded in 1872, beyond such instances as No. 32 and No. 171, which are no longer to be denied or disputed, but which you now call "slight and immaterial".

In the course of the proceedings of your Committee of November 1880, you do not offer any explanation, or even a remark, regarding these two doors, masked inside and unfastened outside until 1877. You probably considered this circumstance, like the deficiency of £1,000 in four items of jewellery, to be "slight and immaterial". And perhaps when the date of Major Wilson's and Mr. Krishna Murti's precautions is considered, you would be, in a certain sense, right.

Mr. Rungacharloo, likewise, is silent as to the doors. He thinks it quite enough to "appeal in regard to the success of" his "arrangements" "to the high and strict *morale*" maintained by him in the Palace.* We have Mr. Rungacharloo's word for this "high and strict *morale*", and for "the success of his arrangements", which are not, however, made brilliantly manifest by the fact that when Mr. Rungacharloo had been for five years in direct and exclusive charge of the Palace Wardrobe, one-sixth of that property, to the value of at least £4,000, was lost.

Mr. Rungacharloo, having attributed "the success of his arrangements" to the "*morale*" prevailing in the Palace under his fostering care, remembers that there was one person in the Palace, very frequently mentioned in the *Statesman*, very closely associated with himself, whose "*morale*", instead of being "high and strict", was notoriously low and loose. This was Murree

* *Mysore Papers*, C 3,026 of 1881, p. 175.

Mullapa. Mr. Rungacharloo makes a show of taking the bull by the horns. Alluding to this man, he says:—"I must, however, specially refer to one of the leading subordinate officials who was connected with the jewellery department of the Palace till his death some six years ago."

It is remarkable that, at the outset, Mr. Rungacharloo should misplace the date of this person's death. Murree Mullapa did not die about *six*, but about *nine* years before November 1880. Mr. Rungacharloo, nevertheless, had many reasons to recollect this death, and the circumstances connected with it. Murree Mullapa died in December 1871, six months after the widowed Ranee Chundra Vilasa, in whose "especially large" collection of jewels we have found some striking deficiencies. About six months after Murree Mullapa's death you commenced, in July 1872, that rearrangement of the jewels during which some of those deficiencies were observed, but not reported.

"This man, named Murree Mullapa," continues Mr. Rungacharloo, "was an influential and important official under the late Maharajah, and was chiefly in charge of the jewellery department under him. His reputation was not of the best kind, as indeed was the case with several of the higher officials in the Palace, who were exposed to the corrupting influences and intrigues carried on in the former *régime*, a misfortune which did not so much affect the smaller officials. He was retained by Colonel Elliot, as by long experience he was useful, and the Maharanis would have objected to the removal of so old a servant."

The truth I believe to be that Colonel Elliot, who was well aware of the man's infamous character, did not appoint him, and would not have retained him, if he could have exercised any choice in the matter. The Maharanis were never consulted. The only person who found Murree Mullapa's "experience useful", and wanted him, was Mr. Rungacharloo. Colonel Elliot, in fact, was not strong enough, any more than was Colonel Gregory Haines, the Guardian chosen by the

old Maharajah and the Secretary of State, to get the man removed.*

I return to Mr. Rungacharloo's apology for Murree Mullapa. "I can only say that whatever he had been, he was guilty of no misconduct in connection with the jewellery department during the time I was employed in the Palace."

Mr. Rungacharloo having already declared that there was "no reason to suspect any irregularities of any kind",† can, of course, express no suspicion of any particular person.

"Indeed," continues Mr. Rungacharloo, "the arrangement was such, and there were so many people jointly responsible, that any irregularity on the part of any one individual was not feasible."

There we are quite in accord. I certainly do not believe that "any individual" alone or single-handed, carried out the work of "abstraction and substitution".

But, according to Mr. Rungacharloo, this pander and poisoner, who was regarded with such dread and horror that, in the words of Colonel Haines, the people "spoke of him with bated breath" made a fine end, and went off in the odour of sanctity.

"I may add that even this individual was so influenced by the altered tone and ideas that he bequeathed almost the whole of his property for the education and improvement of his castemen."‡

Mr. Rungacharloo hardly does himself justice by omitting all mention of his own share in these pious dispositions, and of the subsequent vexations imposed upon himself. The records of the several suits brought against him in the Civil Courts of Mysore by the widow of Murree Mullapa, not settled before the end of 1879, prove that the strange intimacy with the horrible parasite from whose contaminating presence Colonel Haines tried in vain to protect the Maharajah, terminated by Mr. Rungacharloo dictating a death-bed codicil to Murree Mullapa's will, and undertaking its

* *Ante*, p. 6.

† *Ante*, p. 26.

‡ *Mysore Papers*, C 3,026 of 1881, p. 175.

execution, whereby the widow was prevented from adopting a son, and reduced to a mere maintenance out of the estate, while Mr. Rungacharloo became custodian of the property, including a large amount in jewels.

Thus we see that, besides the unexplained loss of one sixth of the Wardrobe, to the value of £4,000, there are two singular, not to say sinister, facts in the history of Mr. Rungacharloo's nine years' Controllership, on which no light is thrown—the dark doors, "quite accessible from the zenana", and his close and intimate alliance with a man of such hideous infamy as Murree Mullapa. As to those two facts, both he and you are quite silent.

And there is a third fact, that of his having held possession of the master-key for days and weeks together, which he denies. In that denial you support him. Mr. Rungacharloo denies that fact in the following sentence of his deposition:—"The jewels were deposited in wooden almirahs in a room in the centre of the Palace, the keys of which were and have ever since been in charge of the Guardian or other European officer in charge of the Palace."* You very decidedly deny that fact in paragraph 5 of your Memorandum of the 29th of July 1880, in reply to the Memorandum on the Mysore Jewels signed "E. B.":—

"I should add," you say, "that the keys of the jewel-room and jewel cases have always been kept in an iron safe in the Palace under a military guard, and that the key of that safe has always been in the hand of the Guardian, or other high European official resident at Mysore."†

Your statement, as well as that of Mr. Rungacharloo, on whose word, I presume, you relied, is inaccurate. On several occasions when the Guardian, Colonel Malleson, was absent on leave or duty, the master-key was handed over to Mr. Rungacharloo, and not to any European official.

Colonel Malleson, on his first arrival at Mysore in

* *Mysore Papers*, No. 1 of 1881, p. 174. † *Ibid.*, p. 148.

July 1869, received the master-key from Colonel John Campbell, then Commissioner of the Ashtagram Division, into whose charge it had been committed by Colonel Gregory Haines, on his resigning the office of Guardian. The key never again came into the hands of Colonel John Campbell, though he remained at Mysore, holding the same position of Commissioner, until February 1873. He was succeeded by Colonel Thomas Clerk until July 1874, when Colonel A. C. Hay took up the appointment.

When Colonel Malleson left Mysore, in company with the Ursoos, members of the Maharajah's family, in December 1870, to wait on Lord Mayo at Calcutta, the master-key was transferred to Mr. Rungacharloo, and not to Colonel John Campbell, or any other "high European official".

Colonel Malleson proceeded a second time to Calcutta, with the Ursoos, in December 1873, when the master-key was again given to Mr. Rungacharloo—not to Colonel Thomas Clerk, who was then Commissioner of the Division, or to any other high European official—and the key so remained in Mr. Rungacharloo's possession until the Guardian's return in February 1874.

When Colonel Malleson was relieved of the Guardianship in June 1876, he was directed to give over charge to Mr. Rungacharloo, who once more held possession of the master-key for some weeks.

Major F. A. Wilson will be able to satisfy you as to the person from whom he received the key on his arrival at Mysore in August 1876, to take up his appointment as Tutor; and you will find that person to have been Mr. Rungacharloo, and not Colonel A. C. Hay, or any other "high European official". It is, in short, Major F. A. Wilson, Colonel Malleson, Colonel John Campbell, Colonel Thomas Clerk, and Colonel A. C. Hay that I summon to justify my flat contradiction of the assertions made by you and Mr. Rungacharloo that the master-key was always in the hand of the Guardian or other "high European official". I have before me now a note from Colonel Hay to Colonel

Malleson, dated "61, Lee Park, Blackheath, Oct. 22nd, 1881", in which he says :—

"While you held the office of Guardian at Mysore it never was the practice for you to make over the master-key of the jewel-room to me, and I cannot recall a single instance of your having done so."

You have accused me of having made "strange misstatements", but have totally failed to support or justify that accusation, even in the most trifling point. I have now convicted you of having, in concurrence with Mr. Rungacharloo, misled the Government of India, by a strange misstatement in a matter of the very greatest importance.

In your Memorandum of July 29th, 1880, you say:— "What I did in the matter of the re-arrangement of the jewels was not done in secret, as asserted, but was duly made known at the time to the Chief Commissioner, Sir Richard Meade."*

I never asserted that the re-arrangement of 1872 was a secret affair, but that it was a highly irregular affair, begun without any official sanction, and finished without any official report. It may not have been a secret affair, and yet, considering the interesting nature of the work, and the long period over which it extended, it seems to have been "made known at the time", "duly" or unduly, to very few people. It was not known to Colonel John Campbell, the Commissioner of the Division, with whom you were in daily social intercourse, and who had himself been for a short time in charge of the jewel-room keys. It was not known to Colonel (now Major-General) James Puckle, then Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, who must have been aware if there had been any official or demi-official communication. It was not known to several other officers of the Mysore Commission, who, in the ordinary course, must have heard of such proceedings, and who, on the other hand, came to hear those pre-

* *Mysore Papers*, No. 1 of 1881, p. 148.

valent rumours as to misappropriation of the Palace jewels, of which you say you never heard anything, "save in the Memorandum published in the *Statesman*".

In March 1872, Major (now Lieutenant-Colonel) Charles Elliot, C.B., who, assisted by Mr. Rungacharloo, had arranged the jewels in 1868, resigned his office as Commissioner of the Mysore Division, and went home, about three months before the rearrangement of the jewels was commenced in July 1872. You had then been for more than a year officiating as Guardian, Colonel Malleson having gone away on leave in March 1871. You entered on a rearrangement of the jewels without consulting the officer who had received the thanks of the Government in 1868 for "the excellent arrangements" he had made "to prevent any spoliation or loss".

You insist upon it, however, that what you "did in the matter" was "duly made known at the time to Sir Richard Meade". The term "at the time" is vague and indefinite. The word "duly" seems to convey an improper assumption. I can conceive no "*due*" mode of making known the rearrangement of property valued at more than £300,000, except that of correspondence duly dated, in which the sanction, the commencement and the conclusion of such an important work would be duly recorded.

We know to a certainty that there is no contemporaneous order, permission, sanction, report or communication, official or demi-official, relating to the six weeks' manipulation of the jewels in 1872, or to the "great number of inaccuracies" alleged to have been then detected by yourself and Mr. Rungacharloo in that original catalogue for which Mr. Rungacharloo had received the thanks of Government.

In your Order of the 14th of March 1881, dismissing the Residency Sheristadar, you declare, likewise, that "Sir Richard Meade, who had been Chief Commissioner in 1872, was familiar with what had then taken place". Here are your exact words in paragraph 6 of that Order:—

"Mr. Gordon did not make any formal or official reply, but returned the Secretary's letter No. 110 at once, with a few words written at the moment on the back of it, mentioning, for the Chief Commissioner's information (Mr. Saunders having become Chief Commissioner in Sir Richard Meade's place, who had been Chief Commissioner in 1872, and was familiar with what had then taken place), that he had rearranged the jewels, and placed them in new and suitable receptacles in 1872, and that during that rearrangement he had noticed errors such as that under notice, though he could not from memory distinctly recall the particulars of the jewel referred to by Captain Wilson."

Your style is not always as lucid as could be wished, and this passage might be taken to mean that Sir Richard Meade was not only "familiar" with the fact that a rearrangement had taken place in 1872, but was also "familiar" with the fact that you had found "a great number of inaccuracies" in the catalogue. But that cannot have been your meaning, because it is clear Sir Richard Meade can never have heard of these "errors".

Even if you were now to throw some light on the very obscure terms, "familiar", "duly", and "at the time", there would still be need of some further explanation. For it is clear that whatever you may have "made known" to Sir Richard Meade, and whenever, and in whatever style, it may have been made known, everything that you "did in the matter of the rearrangement of the jewels", was not made known "at the time", or at any time, to Sir Richard Meade, or to anybody concerned. On the 29th of July 1880, for example, you tell the Government of India that in July 1872 "fresh additional lists of the jewels, in the order of the rearrangement, were made".* This was not "duly made known" to Sir Richard Meade. No fresh list was furnished to the Chief Commissioner. This was not "duly made known" to Colonel G. B. Malleson on his resuming charge of the

* *Mysore Papers*, No. 1 of 1881, p. 148.

office in 1873. It is perfectly certain that neither of these gentlemen—the head of the Mysore Government and the permanent Guardian—was ever informed either of "the great number of inaccuracies" in the old lists, first divulged in 1877, or of the "fresh lists", first mentioned in 1880. For Sir Richard Meade, in paragraph 7, of his Order No. 135, of 30th November 1874, when the "burglaries" from the Wardrobe had suggested some doubt as to "the security of the very valuable property kept in the Palace", calls for "copies of the lists of the property, prepared in 1868, for record in this office, any changes that have taken place being duly noted in them". According to your explanatory Memorandum of July 1880, the whole had been changed, and new lists had been made in July 1872. But not a hint as to "fresh lists" was given to Sir Richard Meade in reply to his requisition in November 1874. On the contrary, Colonel Malleson—*i.e.*, Mr. Rungacharloo—proclaims "the accuracy of the original lists", even to the absence of "a single error".*

It was on the strength, in fact, of Mr. Rungacharloo's assurances, conveyed in the Guardian's letter of the 22nd of December 1874, as to the perfect security of "the whole of this complicated property", proved by not "a single error" having been found during the re-arrangement of 1872, that Sir Richard Meade consented in his letter dated the 11th of January 1875, to mitigate the censure he had passed upon the want of care, vigilance, and activity evinced by Mr. Rungacharloo with regard to the Palace "burglaries".

It is remarkable, to say the least, that throughout the proceedings that have seen the light, or have been instituted, in consequence of the casual disclosures of 1877, and of my Memorandum of 1880, less information is derived, and, strange to say, less appears to be demanded, from Mr. Rungacharloo, than from those who must have had less knowledge, and who clearly have less responsibility.

When we review the Report of your "final" Com-

* Appendix A.

mittee of November 1880, we find that Mr. Rungacharloo, the original and permanent keeper of the jewels, tells us very little, while the temporary custodians, Major Wilson, Mr. Krishna Murti, and Mr. Ananda Rao, tell us a great deal.

During that critical period between July and September 1877, when the facts as to the abstraction and substitution of jewels were within reach of the Chief Commissioner, if he had been of an inquiring turn of mind, Mr. Rungacharloo happened to be out of the way—happened, in fact, to go out of the way—just when he might naturally have been called upon to answer questions as to the discrepancies between the actual value of certain jewels, and their value as ascertained by a jury of experts in 1868. Colonel Elliot and Mr. Rungacharloo had certified to the accuracy of the catalogue, and had been thanked by Government for "their excellent arrangements to prevent spoliation and loss". Moreover, Mr. Rungacharloo, speaking through the voice of Colonel Malleson in the letter dated 22nd of December 1874, had assured the Chief Commissioner that during the rearrangement of the jewels in 1872, "the accuracy of the original lists" was "proved" by not "even a single error" being found "in the whole of this complicated property".*

At this time no discrepancies of value, no instances of "abstraction and substitution" had been discovered, or were officially suspected, outside of the department.

And yet, even at this time, it is to be observed that Mr. Rungacharloo, the real custodian of the Wardrobe and Jewel-room, is allowed quietly to assume, in that same letter of December 22nd, 1874, that "the security of property in the Palace" is a mere question of rules and forms, "of the existing arrangements", "made by Major Elliot and approved of by his successors". He is permitted, without any adverse comment, to go very near divesting himself of all personal responsibility. "I am not aware", he says, in conclusion, "that any improvement could be made in them"—the arrange-

* Appendix A.

ments. "If any further instructions are given on the subject, they will be obeyed."* He has, in short, no duty but that of obeying the rules imposed by his responsible superior. Nevertheless, it may be observed, *en passant*, that Sir Richard Meade's 'instructions' for an annual examination of the Jĕwels were not 'obeyed'." But in July 1877, discrepancies of value *had* been discovered, and either Major Wilson or the Chief Commissioner, by making inquiries and insisting on answers from the only person present who had been thanked for the original catalogue, and had ever since been in sole charge of the property, might have been put on the scent of the process by which the jewels had been reduced in value.

The two extra doors, "quite accessible from the zenana", were also detected about the same time, and by the same persons, Mr. Krishna Murti and Major F. A. Wilson, in temporary and partial charge. It seems, therefore, to have been an equally unfortunate and notable concurrence of circumstances, —fortuitous, perhaps, but strange,—that just at the crisis when his explanations were wanted, Mr. Rungacharloo should have gone away on leave. The fact is not easily to be gathered from the published papers, but, as you must be aware, is none the less a fact, that when "the Chief Commissioner's proceedings, No. 42, of the 16th June" 1877,† giving sanction to the list of jewels to be presented to Subramanya Urs on the occasion of his marriage, were issued. Mr. Rungacharloo, Controller of the Household, the working head of the Department, was present at Mysore. But during the inquiry that immediately followed into the puzzling deficiency of about £540 in the value of one of the selected articles, Mr. Rungacharloo took his departure, leaving all inquiries and all explanations alike to be made by inexperienced and irresponsible persons. Captain (now Major) F. A. Wilson, the Tutor, presents the scanty intelligence and halting opinions contained in his letter of the 21st of August 1877, as coming,

* Appendix A. † *Mysore Papers*, No. 1 of 1881, p. 149.

not from Mr. Rungacharloo, whose name is not mentioned in it, but from the Jewel Sheristadar Rama Kristnia, a poor fellow on thirty rupees a month, who in your presence, or before Mr. Rungacharloo, would not have dared to call his soul his own. In July 1877, just when Captain F. A. Wilson was going to let out for the first time those discrepancies in value which are now disclosed as the results of abstraction and substitution, "noticed in the examination of 1872",* Mr. Rungacharloo was off, leaving the burden of defence to be borne by Captain Wilson and Mr. Krishna Murti, who were safe in their ignorance, and by you, the Judicial Commissioner of Mysore, and already for several terms Acting Chief Commissioner, who were not only safe, but strong and unimpeachable by your official position.

When you were asked to elucidate the strange fact that Jewel No. 32, valued in 1868 by a jury of experts at £600, was represented in 1877 by an inferior article worth not more than £60, you had not much of an explanation to offer, but it sufficed. Your answer to the reference from the Chief Commissioner was dated the 5th of September 1877, and ran as follows :—

"I revised, and re-arranged, and placed in new receptacles designed by myself, the Palace jewels in July 1872, or about that time. The work was done in my presence, in that of Mr. Rungacharloo, the Controller, and all the Palace officials concerned. It was a work much required. It occupied us for several hours daily for more than six weeks. I found several such errors as that under notice, but at this distance of time, and considering the very great number of jewels and the great number of such inaccuracies, cannot recall the particulars of the jewels referred to herein—5, 9, 77."†

To express astonishment at Mr. C. B. Saunders, the Chief Commissioner, having been satisfied with this answer, might seem a little hard on that gentleman, considering that the very unsatisfactory answers by

* *Ante*, pp. 20, 22.

† *Mysore Papers*, No. 1 of 1881, p. 144.

yourself, Mr. Rungacharloo, and your packed Committee, have satisfied the Viceroy in Council. But I must point out that in 1877, as at every subsequent period, the essentials for a retrospective and comparative inquiry were much more accessible at Mysore than at Calcutta. For example, I do not feel at all sure that the combined appeal of Colonel Malleson and Mr. Rungacharloo to the Chief Commissioner, dated 22nd of December 1874, was ever transmitted to the Government of India, but there it was at Bangalore,—and by no means pushed away into some dark pigeonhole,—when your very unexplanatory Note of the 5th of September 1877, came in. I am a little astonished that the eulogies on "the original lists" by Colonel Malleson and Mr. Rungacharloo, contradicting your assertion of their inaccuracy, should have escaped notice in 1877, because that very correspondence of December 1874 and January 1875, on the subject of the "burglaries" and the neglected order for an annual examination, had been brought before the Chief Commissioner by the Secretary, Colonel Tredway Clarke, in September 1876.* How came it that Colonel Tredway Clarke did not bring these two irreconcileable documents into conjunction in September 1877? If the Secretary was not capable of such very moderate perspicacity, there ought surely to have been some Assistant Secretary, confidential clerk or keeper of records, to bring to the Chief Commissioner's notice that while you declared "a great number of such inaccuracies" as that which reduced jewel No. 32 to a tenth of its recorded value, to have been found in the lists of 1868, when you and Mr. Rungacharloo rearranged the jewels in 1872, Colonel Malleson and Mr. Rungacharloo, referring to that same rearrangement, had certified to "the accuracy of the original lists", and that there was not "even a single error in the whole of this complicated property".

I am, then, a little surprised that the Chief Com-

† See the deposition of B. Ramaswamy Iyengar, Residency Sheristadar, before you on the 26th of August 1880.

missioner was so easily satisfied with your Note of the 5th of September 1877. I am not, on the other hand, at all surprised to observe that since its more public appearance in the Memorandum signed "E. B.", you are much dissatisfied with it yourself,—so dissatisfied that you have made an example of an innocent victim on account of that publication. Your Note, lightly and indifferently glanced at by Colonel Tredway Clarke and Mr. C. B. Saunders, assumed a very different aspect when brought by me into the light of day, and placed in due relation with other documents. So at least it seems to have struck you, for on every subsequent occasion you have cried it down, sought to modify and minimise its meaning, and even to make it mean the very reverse of its obvious purport. In your Memorandum of the 29th of July 1880, paragraph 2, you term it "no official report", "but a few words on the back of the letter".* In paragraph 4 you say that you "wrote a few remarks from memory upon Captain Wilson's letter".† In paragraph 6 of your Order of the 14th of March 1881, condemning and dismissing the Sheristadar, you say that you "did not make any formal or official reply, but returned the letter at once with a few words written at the moment on the back of it".

My experience of such matters does not show me anything informal, unofficial, or unusual in the mode or language of your Note. Certainly its consisting of a "few words", its being written "at once", "at the moment", and "from memory", did not make it informal or unofficial in the eyes of the Chief Commissioner, Mr. Saunders. If he considered the brevity and promptitude of a reply to be an official merit and the best of formalities, I think he was right.

You say it was written "from memory". Your memory, then, on the 5th of September 1877, told you that during the rearrangement of the jewels begun in July 1872, you and Mr. Rungacharloo had found "a great number of inaccuracies" in the original register

* *Mysore Papers*, No. 1 of 1881, p. 147.

† *Ibid.*, p. 148.

of 1868. Your memory told a different tale when you had to answer my Memorandum signed "E. B." In your Memorandum written with that object, and dated the 29th of July 1880, you say:—

"My belief is that my strong impression at the time I made the re-arrangement (eight years have now elapsed), was that the original register of 1868 was, in all essentials, remarkably accurate; surprisingly so when the circumstances were considered."*

In July 1880, not eight years, but less than three, had elapsed since you wrote "from memory" your statement of September 1877. When you wrote the later statement of July 29th, 1880, your memory told you that "your belief" was that your "strong impression at the time" had been that the original register of 1868 "was, in all essentials, remarkably", even "surprisingly", "accurate". But "at the time", three years before, on the 5th of September 1877, you had written "from memory" that the original register contained "a great number of inaccuracies". Now the probability clearly is that the earlier impression is the more correct, because, though a man might forget in 1880 that he had some years before found inaccuracies in a list, he could not possibly, from any defect of memory, forget himself in 1877 into a belief that he had found "a great number of inaccuracies" in 1872. That would be a freak of fancy, not an effort of memory.

And in fact there was no freak of fancy. Your earlier impression was quite correct. There *were* a great number of inaccuracies in 1872. Such attention as could be given by your select Committee during the eight days' gallop through which you conducted them, without any valuation, brought out some capital specimens of abstraction and substitution, "noticed in the examination of 1872", but not reported, showing a deficiency in value of £1,000 on only four items of jewellery".†

If so much evidence, confirmatory of the scandalous

* *Mysore Papers*, No. 1 of 1881, p. 148.

† *Ante*, pp. 20 to 24.

rumours which you proclaimed to be incredible, slipped out in your perfunctory and illusive examination, how much more might not have been extracted by a strict and independent inquiry, and, as Mr. Krishna Murti suggests, by "a proper valuation".

If such an important fact, quite breaking down one buttress in Mr. Rungacharloo's defensive structure, could be drawn out of Colonel A. C. Hay—not, as you will admit, a hostile witness,—by one straightforward question*, how much more light might not have been thrown into dark places, if "the responsible officers in Mysore" had been called upon to meet the "specific statements regarding losses", not by a general chorus in your company, but by separate depositions before an impartial and capable authority!

Although I may be admitted to have shown very conclusively that there were at one time good grounds for a special inquiry; although I may have cleared myself from your charges of "misstatement", "mischievous invention", and the "garbling" of documents, —what object, it may still be asked, can I now have, except one of sheer mischief or malevolence, in stirring up unpleasant matters that have been definitively settled? The Palace Jewels have been transferred from your custody to that of the Maharajah, and the Government of India, in a despatch dated the 26th of May 1881, approve and confirm your proceedings. There is an end of the whole thing. That despatch, with the report and receipt of Basavappajee Urs and five others, on behalf of the Maharajah, has been condescendingly communicated for my information, with reference to two official letters addressed by me to the Indian Government in November and December 1880.† What can I want or expect more?

My last letter in the official correspondence‡ explains why, notwithstanding the approval of Government, I cannot acknowledge your first proceedings in this matter as Resident, to be more correct or more

* *Ante*, p. 35. † Appendix B. ‡ Appendix B.

conclusive than your last proceedings as Chief Commissioner. The report and receipt from the Committee nominated by Mr. Rungacharloo, accepted and forwarded by you, exactly constitute that mutual acquittance between Mr. Rungacharloo and yourself, which I foresaw would be proffered, and which I must still pronounce to be good for nothing. Under the circumstances already explained, the report of the Select Committee assembled by Mr. Rungacharloo in April 1881, is as worthless as that of the Select Committee assembled by you in November 1880, of which, indeed, it is a mere echo. One gentleman, Mr. Ananda Rao, who from his ability and official position must have taken the lead on the second occasion, was also on the former Committee. Your deputy, Colonel Hay, took part in both transactions.

The same deficiencies vitiate the two ostensible examinations, and render them equally illusory and futile as a release or acquittance between Ward and Guardian. There is no disinterested or independent party present. The whole question being one of value, there is no valuation. This last fatal defect, against which I raised, in good time, but in vain, a warning voice, is, also, noticed by Mr. P. Krishna Murti, the Jaghiredar of Yellandur and head of Poornia's family. "I am no judge", he says, "of the values, and no proper valuation was now taken."*

Perhaps he attached no particular meaning to those words when he placed them on record. Perhaps he had no particular doubt or misgiving when he revealed the two masked and unsecured doors.† I know nothing of this gentleman's capacity or strength of character, but the peculiarities of his position are sufficiently intelligible. He has probably felt himself helpless for some years; but, on the other hand, he alone among the seven signatories of your Report of November 1880, is rooted in Mysore by the enduring relations of ancestral fealty. Your official indemnities cannot absolve him. His honour and his house are pledged

* *Mysore Papers*, No. 1 of 1881, p. 173. † *Ante*, p. 28.

to the Maharajah, and he may well wish them, and expect them, to outlast your incumbency and Mr. Rungacharloo's domination.

I do not believe, and no well-informed person believes, that these matters are definitively settled. Discussions and scandals of many years' currency, although they may be embittered, cannot be closed or dispelled by a dictatorial decree, but only by fair and open investigation. Though silence may seem to prevail in Mysore, the scandal subsists in full force. It may break out at any time,—the later the worse,—but its propagation in the dark, and in an aggravated form, must be even more injurious to Imperial authority. These considerations alone would sufficiently justify my persistence, and acquit me of any mischievous or malevolent object. My political purpose, however, is more complex and of wider extent.

I have resented—not unnaturally or unreasonably, I think—your imputations on my good faith; I have defended myself against them, not, I trust, ineffectually. But there never has been any malice or malevolence in my heart against you; while I entered on the inquiry, which led to my writing the Memorandum of 1880, signed "E. B.", with a positive prejudice in favour of Mr. Rungacharloo.

Almost the only act that seems to have seriously shaken his official credit and prospects, and brought down upon him, I believe, a reprimand, I was inclined to consider as a proof at once of his judgment and of his public spirit. Mr. L. B. Bowring, who, as that gentleman himself complained in a letter published in the *Bangalore Spectator*, dated "Torquay, 8th July 1874", "nominated him to the post of Controller", and was thereby "brought into an unfortunate collision with his superior", Colonel Haines,* had not long retired from the post of Chief Commissioner, before Mr. Rungacharloo, disguised as "a Native of Mysore", made an anonymous attack on his patron, accusing him of "a narrow policy" and of "a want of regard for the con-

* *Ante*, p. 6.

venience of the people". There was so much in this pamphlet* identical with my contention that nearly all the superfine changes in the administration of Mysore since General Cubbon's time have been changes for the worse,† that I did not feel at all inclined to find fault with Mr. Rungacharloo for what Mr. Bowring, in the letter already quoted, indignantly called "kicking down the ladder by which he rose". Mr. Rungacharloo seems, however, to have made a practice of thus kicking down ladders. I have become acquainted with his furtive detractions of Colonel Elliot and Colonel Malleson; I have been struck with his constant plan of submissively lurking behind each nominal superior in succession while present, and reviling him confidentially when absent or out of place. But until my attention was drawn to the matter now before us, I was disposed to think highly of Mr. Rungacharloo. The consistency with which I have always upheld the eligibility of natives of India for the very highest offices in their own country, might, I should hope, gain credit for the declaration that I have most reluctantly, in this instance, impugned the merits of an Indian who has attained an eminent position.

Leaving out of consideration, however, those matters of the Wardrobe and Jewel-room which, I maintain, have been unaccountably slurred over, Mr. Rungacharloo has attained this eminent position by means of some of the worst points in our system of Indian administration. Not being "a Native of Mysore", having no weight or influence by birth or connections, by character or conduct, either in the Palace or among the people,—being, in fact, an object of general distrust and dislike,—he has been forced on the reconstituted State as Minister, when he is known throughout Mysore simply as your man. The Maharajah has had no choice in the matter. The Imperial Government has not, either in the person of the Viceroy or of the Secretary of State, had any real voice or share in the

* *British Administration of Mysore*, Longmans, 1874.
† *Ante*, p. 5.

appointment. The over-centralisation at Calcutta defeats itself. Efficient control by the Viceroy in Council has become impossible. Each provincial authority who has the knack of keeping his files clear and his connection with "the Office" close, and who can give a good account of himself in an Administration Report, is, for his day, sole autocrat. He tells his own story, and there is no one to question it. Everything of consequence that goes to head-quarters is private and confidential; and many an important matter is settled by unrecorded notes or a quiet talk, before the form is gone through of taking the orders of Government. In all this, and in every instance, the public opinion of a province,—better informed always, and in time of need far more important, than any official opinion,—is inarticulate and inaudible.

Ever since I took to writing on Indian affairs I have preached one doctrine; and my single "political purpose" has been to make that doctrine understood and accepted by my fellow-countrymen. My doctrine is that India can only be kept under British supremacy, with any prospect of permanence and peace, as an Empire of confederated States and provinces, and not as a centralised Kingdom.

The policy proposed by Mr. Bright, in his great speech of the 24th of June 1858, on the second reading of the India Bill,—of breaking up the Empire into at least five independent Presidencies, defined in general by differences of language and geographical position—still shadows forth the only true policy in the stage at which we have arrived, for promoting the stability of the Empire and the peaceful progress of India. Mr. Bright's plan of decentralisation—a plan as sound and as practicable now as in 1858—was a statesmanlike protest against the vain attempt at governing two hundred millions of people, "twenty nations, speaking twenty languages," by means of a compact and centralised bureaucracy. If logically carried out,—liberalised, as we may be sure he would approve, by a wise and generous confidence in our own consultative and re-

presentative principles, and by an equitable admission of qualified Natives to the highest posts,—it might go a long way at least towards solving the almost insolvable problem of making our direct administration popular. "The essential problem of Indian statesmanship", as I have said elsewhere, "is how to reconcile self-government for India with Imperial supremacy for Great Britain. The true solution is that the more we concede the former, the more we confirm the latter."

At present, however, it is only in a reformed Native State that the possession of local self-government and submission to Imperial supremacy, can be completely reconciled. The most efficacious method of decentralisation,—efficacious at once for the financial relief and the moral reinforcement of the Paramount Power,—would be that of contracting the territories under our direct rule, reinstating and extending native administration in reformed and protected States. We could then greatly reduce our civil and military establishments. We could shift the burden of debt in great part from the Imperial Power to the allied Princes, by the legitimate and irresistible temptation of territorial aggrandisement.

Our direct administration has not as yet certainly become popular with any class, or in any locality. The divergence of feeling and interest between our people, official and non-official, and the Natives in our Provinces, is not an evil that tends to decrease or to cure itself. The Princes, on the other hand, fully appreciate the solid advantages of British Imperial supremacy. Our Commissioners and Collectors have no social influence, because they have no social intercourse with the people. But our Government is in close enough contact, and can keep up a clear enough understanding with the Indian Sovereigns and Chieftains through whom, if the practice of its "Political" representatives were so prescribed and so circumscribed as to be congenial and encouraging, it could govern and guide all the nations of India, and make Imperial supremacy popular. In proportion as we destroy,

weaken, or alienate these manageable conservative powers, we shall stimulate and set loose the unmanageable brute force and fanaticism over which we have no control or influence whatever.

With these convictions and on these grounds, my course, however obscure, has been at least consistent. Before the great rebellion of 1857 opened the eyes of so many statesmen to the true conditions of our Indian Empire, my feeble voice had raised its petty protest, officially recorded, under peculiar circumstances, in a then recently annexed province, against the policy of annexation.

Before helping Colonel Macqueen and Dr. Campbell in London to counteract the importunate applications from Calcutta for the annexation of Mysore, I had, at Madras in 1861, recommended the very process of maintaining the State under an adopted heir, and of gradually restoring Native agency,* decreed by Lord Cranborne (now Marquis of Salisbury) and Sir Stafford Northcote in 1867, protracted and perverted by your predecessors and yourself.

Even with a Dewan of distinction, of good report and marked capacity, it would be no easy task now to "restore to the Maharajah the powers of government",† or to reconstitute Mysore as a substantive State, which were the professed objects of the statesmen of 1867, and of all their successors. With the Dewan you have set up, whose antecedents and public repute are such as I have indicated in this Letter, the task is an impossible one.

This is what attracts me, in pursuance of my "political purpose", to the situation in Mysore, even more than the unjustly discharged Sheristadar's personal appeal to me for help, or your charges against me of "garbling documents", "mischievous invention", and "weaving a malicious story". The whole course of Anglo-Indian official dealings with Mysore,—from the

* *Empire in India* (Trübner, 1864), pp. 304 to 316, 338 to 342, and 384 to 402.

† *Mysore Papers*, 385 of 1878, p. 135.

unwarranted sequestration in 1832, through forty years of constantly growing jobbery, and a strange period of heedless unconcern as to the evaporation of our Ward's valuables,—threatens to lead up to an apparent failure of the policy of reforming decentralisation in this recent and conspicuous essay. Believing the decided and systematic adoption of that policy, as a new departure in Imperial rule, to be the most efficient, if not the only remedy for the costliness and contemptuousness of our direct administration, I can only contemplate such an apparent failure as a disastrous probability. I might say much as to the means of yet averting it, but to those who are convinced of the disease the first measures for its cure are obvious enough.

After all, but for your mention of "a political purpose", as an aggravation of my "malicious story", I should hardly have been justified in extending so far the topics of this Letter. In the Memorandum of "E. B." I called for an independent examination and revaluation of the Mysore jewels. I have now endeavoured to show that my suggestion was well founded, and that such a scrutiny, if it has not by this time become impossible, is still much to be desired. I have endeavoured, also, to clear myself from those charges of malicious and mischievous misrepresentation which you have ventured to make against me, and which, as yet, you have entirely failed to justify.

I have the honour to be,

Your most obedient servant,

EVANS BELL.

APPENDIX.

(A.)

In the latter part of 1874, the Chief Commissioner of Mysore, Sir Richard Meade, had before him the record of a trial in the preceding month before Major Hill, the District Magistrate of Mysore, of certain persons charged with being concerned in a "burglary" at the Mysore Palace, and he passed the following "Order thereon":—

No. 135.

"BANGALORE, 30th Nov. 1874.

"From the proceedings in the Magistrate's Court, it would appear that at least two burglaries were committed in the Maharajah's Palace at Mysore. The first seems from the evidence to have occurred in June 1872, when Mr. Vardon, the Police Inspector, drew the attention of Mr. Rungacharlu, the Controller of the Palace, to the rumour prevailing in the bazaar to the effect that certain valuable cloths had been stolen from the Jagan Mahal in the Palace. Mr. Rungacharlu thereupon inspected the room in which the property was kept, and found one of the iron bars of the window loose. This circumstance, however, raised little or no suspicion in his mind, and he merely ordered that the bar should be re-fastened.

"2. The second robbery took place early in May 1874. Soon afterwards, on inspection of the store-room, Mr. Rungacharlu discovered that a number of cloths were missing, and noticed that two of the iron bars in the same window were loose. Being then on the eve of proceeding to the Neelghiries on duty, he deferred taking any action till his return a fortnight after, merely ordering that the bars should be refastened, and private inquiries instituted in the matter. On the 17th of June, after examining five of the boxes containing the more valuable clothes, he found a large number missing, and then gave information to the Police, which resulted in the detection and conviction of the principal culprits. The number of cloths stolen was 234, and their cost is estimated at Rs. 49,080. Of these, 71 cloths, valued at Rs. 12,970, have been recovered, the actual loss is, therefore, estimated at Rs. 36,110.

"3. On the first occasion the action taken by the Controller was altogether inadequate. The boxes containing the valuable property kept in the store-room ought to have been at once carefully examined,

and their contents checked with the original lists. Not only was this obvious and simple measure neglected, but the repair of the window-bar was executed in an inefficient manner.

"4. On the occasion of the second robbery, the condition of the window-bars ought at once to have satisfied Mr. Rungacharlu, as to the reality of the theft and the *modus operandi* of the thieves.

"Nevertheless, no attempt to ascertain the condition of the property was made, and no action beyond the measure, that had already proved futile, of re-fastening the bars, until the 17th of June, or nearly a month and a half afterwards, when some of the chests were examined, and cloths found missing. The Chief Commissioner notices that the evidence of the carpenters and other witnesses, who have deposed to the condition in which the bars were found, differs from that of the Controller, aud indicates that due attention was not given by that officer to this most important of all the suspicious circumstances to which his attention has been called.

"5. It is, in fact, almost impossible to understand why so obviously serious a matter was, until the 17th of June last, dealt with so supinely. The slightest indication of anything suspicious in the state of the windows of a room containing property of such value ought, when coupled with the rumour which the Inspector brought to the notice of the Controller, to have been made the subject of prompt and full inquiry.

"6. It is clear that there is a want of system in the arrangements for the security of the very valuable property kept in the Palace. The Chief Commissioner requests that in future a formal examination of such property may be made every year, between the 1st of January and the 31st of March, under the superintendence of the Guardian. A report of the result should be submitted to this office. Where the property is packed in boxes, duly sealed and labelled, with a list of the contents, and which have not been opened, and are in proper condition, it will be sufficient to notice the fact.

"7. In order that reference may be made to them if necessary, the Chief Commissioner requests that copies of the lists of the property in question, prepared in 1868, may be furnished for record in this office, any changes that have taken place being duly noted in them.

"Ordered that a copy of these proceedings be submitted to the Government of India in the Foreign Department.

"(Sd.) H. WELLESLEY, *Offg. Secretary.*"

Evidently the Chief Commissioner and his Secretary had heard nothing of the "fresh lists" made in 1872, or of the "numerous inaccuracies" then found in the lists "prepared in 1868".

They seem to have taken things rather coolly in Mysore. According to the evidence given by Mr. Vardon, Inspector of Police, on the 12th September 1874, at the trial of the alleged burglaries of "the second occasion", Mr. Rungacharloo did on "the first occasion", in June 1872, examine the store-room,

although the fact of the robbery, which undoubtedly had been perpetrated, seems not to have commended itself to his judgment. This is the substance of Mr. Vardon's testimony:—

"I told Mr. Rungacharloo my suspicions about two years ago, regarding the abstraction of cloths from the palace store-room, and their being hooked out through the window. Mr. Rungacharloo said he did not believe it, as he kept the keys, but would go and see. I met him a few hours afterwards, and he told me my information was incorrect, and that no cloth were missing, but that an iron bar was loose. He quite disarmed my suspicions, and I made no further inquiry. I do not think I reported the matter to the Town Magistrate."

The Police Inspector makes no report of a "burglary" in the Palace to the Town Magistrate. The Controller of the Household and the Acting Guardian, Mr. J. D. Gordon, apparently make no report to anybody. The Chief Commissioner of Mysore in 1872, is left in blissful ignorance of the Wardrobe being robbed in June, and without any official report of the Jewel-room being opened in July for a six weeks' manipulation. He is neither informed that the strong-room has been found to be insecure, nor that the catalogue of "the very valuable property kept in the Palace" has been found to be very inaccurate. In consequence of a judicial inquiry in 1874, the "burglaries" in the Wardrobe and the laxity of "system in the arrangements", became incidentally known to the Chief Commissioner, but it is not until 1877 that another Chief Commissioner quite accidentally hears of the discrepancies and deficiencies in the Jewel-room, and of the unsanctioned and unreported operations of 1872, whereby the arrangements and lists of 1868, for which Major Elliot and Mr. Rungacharloo had received the thanks of Government, had been discredited, and discarded, in favour of a new arrangement and "fresh lists", by Mr. Gordon, without any official report.

In November 1874, however, the Chief Commissioner is roused to a sense that the "action" of Mr. Rungacharloo on "the first occasion" was "inadequate", and that "the valuable property kept in the store-room ought to have been at once carefully examined", and he directs an examination of "the very valuable property kept in the Palace" to be carried out between the 1st of January and the 31st of March in every year, "under the superintendence of the Guardian". A very striking proof of the loose discipline and inattention to the enforcement of orders which prevailed in this department of the Mysore administration is to be found in the fact that the examination thus ordered was never once instituted between November 1874 and October 1880. The Guardian, prompted by Mr. Runga-

charloo, at once objected to this new scrutiny. The Chief Commissioner insisted, but his reiterated orders were of no effect.

The following correspondence was published, by direction or permission of the Chief Commissioner, in the Bangalore newspapers of the 14th of October 1880, after the Governor-General in Council had pronounced that Mr. Gordon's explanation in reply to the Memorandum signed "E.B.", was "completely satisfactory".*

The Bangalore paper, in which I saw the letters, introduced them with these words of acknowledgment:—

"The following official papers about the property of the Mysore Palace have been kindly placed at our disposal."

No. 63.

"GUARDIAN'S OFFICE, MYSORE, *Dated 22nd December* 1874.

"*To the* SECRETARY TO THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF MYSORE.

"SIR,—With reference to the proceedings of the Chief Commissioner dated 30th November 1874, No. 135, I have the honour to forward herewith a Memorandum from the Controller giving an explanation of the circumstances connected with the robbery of clothes in the Palace, and trust that a perusal of the same may satisfy the Chief Commissioner that the action of the Controller, however it may appear in the light of subsequent discoveries, was in accordance with the view which the actual circumstances of the time justified his taking.

"2. With regard to the arrangements existing for the security of the Palace property, I beg to state that the property in question consists of, firstly, jewellery, which are deposited in a room the key of which is held by me, and which is only opened in the presence of myself and that of the Controller. Secondly, of clothes which are perishable articles expended from time to time at the request of the Ranees, or for purposes connected with the Palace. The key of this room has been always in the custody of the Controller, in consequence of the necessity of frequently taking out cloths for Palace purposes. This room is opened only in the presence of the Controller with a number of Departmental Officers and a Sepoy guard; Thirdly, some jewellery belonging to the Chamundy Totty, or religious department, the key of which is also held by the Controller; and, Fourthly, of articles of jewellery, etc., in daily use of the several departments, which are necessarily left in their charge, subject to periodical examinations by the Controller. Lists of all this property, inclusive of the cloths, were prepared in 1868, and were forwarded to the Chief Commissioner's Office, and all subsequent changes of them are duly recorded in books kept in duplicate, one copy of which is kept with the Palace Officer and the other forwarded to the Guardian's office for record. I may add that changes in the jewellery can only take

* *Mysore Papers*, No. 1 of 1881, p. 150.

place with the sanction of the Chief Commissioner, which is duly recorded.

"With regard to periodical examinations of these properties, I may state that such are made of those in the hands of subordinate officers. But the examination of the great bulk of jewellery and cloths would require a very lengthened time, and may seem unnecessary so long as the key of the jewellery-room is held by me, and for which myself and the Controller are jointly responsible, and that of the cloth-room by him, and for which he is responsible, besides the regular Police Establishments, who look to the security of the room from day to day and keep their accounts. After the first preparation of the lists by Major Elliot, in 1868, an examination of the jewellery was made by Mr. Gordon, when he was officiating Guardian, in conjunction with the Controller, for the purpose of re-arranging them. It occupied nearly two months, and the accuracy of the original lists and the care with which these rooms have always been opened on subsequent occasions, have been remarkably proved by the absence of even a single error in the whole of this complicated property. Such examinations, I need hardly add, cannot be resorted to frequently with due regard to other work on hand, though it may sometimes be made with advantage, and I have only to assure the Chief Commissioner that every attention is bestowed on the careful preservation of the property and the proper keeping of the accounts.

"I have, etc.,
"(Sd.) G. B. Malleson,
"*Guardian to H. H. the Maharajah of Mysore.*"

[*Enclosure in the above.*]

MEMORANDUM.

"The Proceedings of the Chief Commissioner, dated 30th November 1874, No. 135, place the circumstances of the robbery of cloths in the Palace in such a light that I deem some explanation from me on the subject necessary, and I beg to submit the same.

"2. These Proceedings seem to be based on the judgment recorded by the District Magistrate on the case. But the inquiry before that officer being only directed to the trial and conviction of the prisoners brought before him, any explanation of my action in the case can hardly find a place in it.

"3. First, with regard to the robbery of June 1872, I beg to state that both myself and the Police Inspector, Mr. Vardon, were at the time engaged in endeavouring to trace out the perpetrators of the Treasury Robbery. Many persons were arrested and many houses were searched without any success. In the course of this inquiry, Mr. Vardon stated to me that he heard it mentioned that people were in the habit of drawing and taking away, by hooked sticks through the windows, cloths which were hung on the ropes in the Gagan Mahal. I was able to tell him at once that though cloths

used to be so hung in the late Maharajah's days, they were all now in boxes, and that the report, like several others of the kind, was probably invented by those apprehended in the Treasury Robbery case, to put us on a wrong scent. I, however, thought it proper to open and examine the room, and found, as I expected, no cloths hung on ropes. My attention was necessarily drawn to the possibility of any access to the room, and neither myself nor the departmental officers who were all then with me could think of any. I noticed an iron bar in one of the skylight windows of the room was wanting, and I gave orders to the department concerned to have a new one fixed. There was nothing, however, in the circumstances to lead to any suspicion, as the building was old, and the possibility of any access through such narrow windows, thirty or forty feet from the ground, in a room situated in the middle of the zenana, and within reach of two guards, and in the vicinity of the cattle sheds, where several servants, who were considered to be generally of good conduct, always slept in the night, did not occur to my mind nor to the several officers of experience who were then with me. That the Inspector took no further notice of the matter, which, indeed, altogether passed out of his mind, would show what he then thought of the report, and it was only during my last inquiry that the circumstances brought to light seemed to confirm the old reports, and I myself brought it to notice.

"4. On the second occasion I received a vague anonymous petition charging the Karohutty servants with the theft of cloths. False petitions of this description have always been numerous. Horses were posted for the Maharajah, and I had to start at once for Ootacamund. But I examined the room, found the bars in the window originally repaired loose, which was to be attributed to the imperfect manner in which the repair was made, or to actual theft. I examined one of the boxes containing the more valuable cloths, which seemed to contain a smaller number than usual. But, as cloths were expended out of the box, the exact state of things could only be found by examining the accounts. There was a suspicion of the robbery, and whilst I could not postpone my journey or leave the key of the room in any other hands, I made every adequate arrangement for the necessary preparation of the accounts for my further examination after my return, for placing additional guards in that part of the Palace, and, what seemed to be most important of all, for watching the suspected individuals. I returned about the 20th of May, and immediately set to work. The accounts of the expenditure of cloths, which were regularly kept in a book, had to be cast up in order to deduct the same from the original list, and, with the accounts thus prepared, I set myself to the examination of the 102 boxes in the room, which necessarily occupied several days. The Guardian having also returned, I communicated with him, and also gave information to the Magistrate and the Police Inspector. I must here explain that, owing to the failure of the measures taken by the Police to trace the perpetrators of the Treasury Robbery, I was inclined to trust very much to myself in the present case, and was especially anxious to avoid any

needless display which might put the perpetrators on their guard. That, altogether, my plans were well concerted, and that, so far from being 'supine', my days and nights were anxiously devoted to the subject, would be seen from the fact that whilst the Police were not able to make any discovery from the 17th June, when they had information, to the 28th July, my exertions were crowned with success. I succeeded in tracing out the perpetrators of the robbery, the full information which I obtained led to some of them confessing, and indications of the houses in which the stolen cloths were deposited, were also obtained. I placed the particulars of the information I obtained before the Magistrate, the confessions were taken down, the suspected houses were searched, and a considerable number of valuable cloths, with Palace marks, were found; and thus, in the course of a single day, the perpetrators were apprehended, with such complete evidence as rendered their escape hopeless. I then left it to the Police to discover the other cloths from the information given by the prisoners, which they did successfully, in communication with me. I may thus state, without intending any disparagement of the efforts of the Police, that the discovery of the robbery in this instance was entirely the result of my exertions and the measures which I adopted.* Whilst I deeply deplored an event which could not have been foreseen by me, and, when dispassionately looked into, could only be regarded as a misfortune, I hoped that my exertions for the discovery of the robbery would contribute to remove any discredit to the department resulting from it.

"5. As regards the arrangements existing for the security of property in the Palace, they were carefully made by Major Elliot and approved of by his successors, and I am not aware that any improvement could be made in them. If any further instructions are given on the subject, they will be obeyed.

"(Sd.) C. Rungacharloo,
"*Controller of H. H. the Maharajah's Household.*

"Dated 22nd December 1874."

No. 164.

"Mysore Chief Commr.'s Office, Camp Palliem,
"11*th Jan.* 1875, *Residency Department.*

"*To the* Guardian to H. H. the Maharajah.

"Sir,—I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated the 22nd December 1874, forwarding a memo. from the Controller giving an explanation of the circumstances connected with the robbery of cloths in the Palace, and offering certain remarks in connection therewith.

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* A very remarkable fact indeed. Mr. Rungacharloo traced and recovered some of the stolen goods when the Police were quite at fault.

"2. In reply, I am to state that the view taken by the Chief Commissioner in this case, as recorded in the order dated 30th November 1874, referred to by you, was formed on the Judicial Proceedings of the District Magistrate who investigated it, and which was transmitted by you as containing full particulars of the circumstances of the robbery, and without any comment on its statements. As you had been called on for a full report of these circumstances, it was naturally concluded that the account of the facts given in the said Proceeding was in all respects complete and satisfactory, and it is to be regretted that the further explanation now submitted was not forwarded with it, as the cause of the Controller's apparent inaction when the second robbery came to his notice, which was commented on in the order of 30th ultimo, is to some extent satisfactorily accounted for now; and the Chief Commissioner considers that the Controller is entitled to be relieved to some extent from the imputation of supineness to which he previously appeared to be fairly open.

"3. There is, however, I am to remark, one point in this explanation calling for notice, viz., that the looseness of the bars of the window, found by Mr. Rungacharloo on his examinination of the room on that occasion, was attributed by him to the imperfect manner in which the previous repairs had been made. It seems to the Chief Commissioner that this would have been impossible if—as ought to have been the case—a duly responsible person had superintended the repairs. With a ledge below the window, and the opposite house only three feet across, the perfect security of the windows should have been most jealously guarded, and there can be no question that from inadvertence this was not the case.

"4. From what has recently come to the Chief Commissioner's knowledge in connection with this case, it appears that the most valuable of the cloths are very rarely issued for use, and he thinks that they should be packed in secure boxes separately by themselves, which would admit of their being dealt with similarly to the jewels.

"5. It is not, of course, desired to give any unnecessary trouble in carrying out a periodical examination of the Palace valuables, in respect to which you may make such arrangements as you may deem most suitable and adequate. But an annnal report of their security and general condition appears, to Sir Richard Meade, to be necessary, and he requests that a report may accordingly be made on 1st April 1875, as previously directed.

"I have, etc.,

"(Signed) H. W. Wellesley,

"*Offg. Secretary.*"

If Colonel Malleson, who, instructed by his ministerial subordinate, Mr. Rungacharloo, had just testified to the perfect accuracy of the original catalogue, had carried out Sir Richard Meade's reiterated orders, he must soon have ascertained some of the "great number of inaccuracies", and anticipated by nearly three years the partial disclosures of 1877. But Sir Richard

Meade's orders were not carried out, notwithstanding Mr. Rungacharloo's assurances that all "instructions" should "be obeyed".

No report was made on 1st April 1875, or in any subsequent year.

(B.)

"No. 673 I.P.

"*From* Sir A. Lyall, K.C.B., *Secretary to the Government of India,*

"*To* Major Evans Bell, London.

"Foreign Department, *dated Simla, the 26th August* 1881.

"(Political.)

"Sir,—I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letters, dated respectively the 26th November and 17th December 1880, regarding the Mysore State Jewels.

["*From* Assistant to the Resident in Mysore,
"*No.* 8, *dated 23rd April* 1881,
"*To* Resident in Mysore,
"*No.* 463, I.P., *dated 26th May* 1881.]

"2. In reply, I am to forward, for your information, copy of the correspondence marginally noted, which has reference on the subject.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"A. C. Lyall,

"*Secretary to the Government of India.*

"No. 8 (Camp), *dated Ootacamund 23rd April* 1881.

"(Confidential.)

"*From*—W. J. Cuningham, Esq., Bo.C.S., *Assistant to the Resident in Mysore,*

"*To*—A. C. Lyall, Esq., C.B., *Secretary to the Govt. of India, Foreign Dept., Simla.*

"I am directed by the Resident to forward, for the information of His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General in Council, copies of the receipt granted in acknowledgment of having received charge of the Mysore Palace jewels by the officers appointed for the purpose by His Highness the Maharajah, and of their report to His Highness.

"2. It seemed to the Resident, I am to explain, to be expedient, with regard to certain statements recently made, and to the inquiries which had been instituted into the safety of the jewels, that special steps should now be taken for delivering and receiving charge of

these jewels, with the utmost care and precision, and he requested that suitable arrangements should be made for doing so, and accordingly His Highness appointed the undermentioned officers to go through the lists of jewels, examine the jewels themselves, and, if found correct, to give an acquittance for them to Colonel A. C. Hay, late Commissioner of the Ashtagram Division, the officer who, under the directions of the Chief Commissioner, had immediate charge of them.

"3. The officers were Bukshee Basavappajee Urs, Bukshee Viraraja Urs, Bukshee Nunjaraja Urs, P. Krishna Row Rai Bahadur, A. R. Sabanputty Mudaliar Rai Bahadur, and T. Ananda Row. The three first are His Highness's relations and principal officials in the Palace, the two next following are members of the recently-formed Council of His Highness the Maharajah, and the last is the officer who has been in joint charge of the Palace establishments and jewels.

"4. The nomination of these officers appeared to Mr. Gordon to be perfectly suitable, and the result of their careful examination has been quite satisfactory, entirely corroborating, as it does, the result of the special inquiry made in October last under Mr. Gordon's personal supervision, which was duly reported to the Government of India."

"Having, by Memorandum No. 1, dated 6th instant, from the Dewan of Mysore,* been appointed by His Highness the Maharajah to take over charge of the Palace jewels hitherto placed, under the orders of the Chief Commissioner of Mysore, in charge of Colonel A. C. Hay, Commissioner of the Ashtagram Division, and Assistant Commissioner Mr. Ananda Row, in charge of Palace duties, and to give an acquittance to the officers of the British Government referred to, we have examined the said jewels and have submitted a report to His Highness the Maharajah, copy of which we subjoin, in which we state that we found all the jewels enumerated in Colonel Elliot's list, with the exception of those otherwise accounted for, to be forthcoming as described in the report of Mr. Gordon and other officers in December 1880, which we found to be correct in every particular; and we hereby acknowledge that we have received and taken charge of the said jewels, with the keys of the jewel-room, the locks of which have been secured under the seals of Bukshee Basavappajee Urs and P. Krishna Row, Esq., Rai Bahadur, one of His Highness's Councillors.

"(Sd.) Bukshee Basavappajee Urs.
" Bukshee Viraraja Urs.
" Bukshee Nunjaraja Urs.
" P. Krishna Row.
" A. R. Sabanputty Mudaliar.
" T. Ananda Row.

"Mysore, 18th April 1881."

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* Mr. C. Rungacharloo.

"*Dated Mysore*, 18*th April* 1881.

"*From*—Bukshee Basavappajee Urs and five others,
"*To*—His Highness the Maharajah of Mysore.

"We, the undersigned, beg respectfully to submit that, in pursuance of your Highness's instructions, conveyed through the Dewan, and the wishes of the British Resident, communicated by Colonel Hay, we proceeded to take an account of the Palace jewels in presence of that gentleman. The operation commenced on Saturday the 9th instant, and was concluded on Saturday the 16th.

"We took for our guide the original list of 1868, prepared under the orders of Colonel Elliot, and the Palace diaries, and went on examining jewel by jewel, noting down against each number any little variation in the number of precious stones, etc., that might be noticed. In cases of doubtful identity, we counted the most valuable precious stones in the jewel, and in a few instances had the article weighed, or the metal assayed as necessity arose, and were thus enabled satisfactorily to identify the whole of the jewels.

"Our task was greatly facilitated by the minute examination made by Mr. Gordon and other officers in October 1880, the report of which found to be correct in every particular, and by the excellent classification and arrangement of the jewels made by the Palace authorities.

"Feeling thus satisfied that all the jewels enumerated in Colonel Elliot's list, with the exception of those that are noted as being otherwise disposed of, or in Your Highness's own use, are forthcoming and are identical, we have taken over charge of the jewel-room, and put on an additional padlock, with our several seals affixed on it, pending further instructions, and have likewise given an acquittance to Colonel Hay, a copy of which we humbly submit for Your Highness's information."

"No. 463 I.P., *dated* Simla, 26*th May* 1881.

"*From*—Secretary to the Govt. of India, Foreign Dept.,
"*To*—Resident, Mysore.

"I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your Assistant's letter No. 8 of the 23rd April 1881, regarding the transfer of the Palace jewels to His Highness the Maharajah.

"2. Having regard to the importance of the matter, you very properly arranged for a careful examination of the jewels, before transfer, by officers of the Mysore Durbar; and their report, enclosed in your letter, is entirely satisfactory. I am to say that your proceedings are approved by the Government of India."

"*From* Major Evans Bell,

"*To the* Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, Calcutta.

"110, Holland Road, Kensington, London, W.

"*September* 30*th*, 1881.

"Sir,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 673, I.P., dated the 26th of August 1881, enclosing for my information copy of a letter from the Assistant Resident in Mysore, dated the 23rd of April, and of a receipt and report signed by Basavappajee Urs and five others, dated the 18th of May last, relating to the transfer of the Mysore Palace jewels from the charge of certain British officers into the custody of the Maharajah's own servants. The Government of India, in a letter to the Resident in Mysore, No. 463, I.P., dated the 26th of May last, with a copy of which I am also furnished, pronounce the proceedings regarding this transfer to be entirely satisfactory.

"2. The communication with which I have thus been honoured is made, you inform me, with reference to my letters dated respectively the 26th of November and the 17th of December 1880, with which I beg to be allowed to associate the Memorandum on the Mysore jewels, published with my initials, E. B., in the Calcutta *Statesman* on the 7th of April and 16th of June 1880.

"3. That Memorandum, which was, of course, written in the hope of leading to some inquiry and to certain precautions, has already been noticed in the proceedings of the Government of India, No. 813, dated 25th December 1880, and in a despatch to the Secretary of State, No. 114, dated the 29th of December 1880, which are published in the Papers presented to Parliament, C 3026 of 1881.

"4. I considered it my duty, in the last paragraph of that Memorandum, after pointing out what seemed to me to be grave reasons for an independent inquiry, to urge that 'if the very same functionaries who had been singled out by circumstances for sole responsibility, were to be left unprotected by any inquiry or supervision, to hand over to the young Maharajah, by their own method and process, property valued in 1868 at more than £350,000, and virtually to grant themselves an acquittance, the seed would be sown for future crops in mischievous rotation of incurable scandals and unanswerable claims'. I learn from the papers you have now forwarded to me, that the very course which I humbly ventured to deprecate has been pursued. No independent inquiry has been made; no precautions have been taken. Sir James Gordon, lately Chief Commis-

sioner and Guardian, now Resident, and Mr. C. Rungacharloo, formerly Controller of the Household, now Dewan, have been left to effect the transfer by their own method and process, and have granted themselves a mutual acquittance.

"5. I considered it my duty in the last paragraph of my letter dated the 26th of November 1880, to remind the Government of India that the persons within the Mysore territory most deeply interested, and most fully informed as to the jewel affairs, as well as those who must be more or less implicated in any irregularities or malpractices, if any such had occurred, were either persons in authority, or under authority, either in a position to dominate, or liable to intimidation. I ventured, therefore, with great deference, to urge that any investigation guided and presided over by the local authorities in Mysore, must be delusive and inconclusive, and that the agency for such an investigation ought to be, as recommended by Captain F. A. Wilson in 1877, 'special', and, I added, of unquestionable independence. The papers published, and the papers now forwarded by you to me, show that no real investigation has been made; that such ostensible inquiries as have taken place have been guided and presided over by the local authorities; that the several Committees appointed to examine, transfer, and receive charge of, the Mysore jewels, have been selected by Sir James Gordon, as Chief Commissioner and Resident, and by Mr. C. Rungacharloo as Secretary and Dewan. Not only was the Committee assembled in October 1880 to examine the jewels composed of Mr. Gordon's own subordinates, but it was composed exclusively of officers who at one time or another had been partially in charge of the jewels. According to Sir James Gordon's own despatch of the 18th of December 1880, 'specific statements' having been made, he seriously announces to the Government of India that he has met the specific statements by combining all the persons whom they affect, more or less, into a Committee to give them a general contradiction.

"6. In the same letter, I ventured to urge on the Government of India that the main point for investigation being the actual present value of the jewels, as compared with the estimated value of 1868, a valuation was essential. I learn from the receipt and report appended to your letter to me, dated 18th April 1881, from Bukshee Basavappajee Urs, and five others, appointed by the Dewan, Mr. C. Rungacharloo, that no valuation of the jewels was made by them.

"Moreover, I learn from Enclosure No. 5 of the despatch from the Government of India to the Secretary of State, No. 114, dated the 29th of December 1880, that no valuation of the jewels was made by the Committee assembled under the guidance and control of Mr. Gordon and Mr. Rungacharloo at Mysore in 1880. Mr. P. N. Krishna Murti, Deputy-Commissioner, states, in answer to Question 7:—'I am no judge of the values, and no proper valuation was now taken.'

"7. The Government of India not having judged it necessary or advisable to make any such inquiry, or to take any such precautions as I considered it my duty to suggest, before handing over charge of the Mysore jewels to the Maharajah, I do not conceive that it would be either useful or becoming for me to submit any further observations on the subject for the judgment of the Government of India.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"EVANS BELL, Major,
"*Late of the Madras Staff Corps.*"

ADVERTISEMENT.

I have said at page 52 of this Letter that the sequestration of Mysore in 1832 was "unwarranted". That the sequestration of the State was not warranted, either from the subsidy being in arrears or in jeopardy, or by any other provision in the Treaty, or by the exigencies of the time, I shall prove clearly in

SOME WORDS AND WORK OF
GENERAL JOHN BRIGGS,

which I hope to publish before the end of the year. I shall, also, show why, in the interests of the Empire, these facts ought to be understood and appreciated.